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UNORTHODOX DIALOGUES
ON EDUCATION AND ART

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

Matter, Life and Value

The Present and Future of Religion, etc.

UNORTHODOX DIALOGUES ON EDUCATION AND ART

By

C. E. M. JOAD

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INTRODUCTION

THE contents of this little book originally formed part of a larger work, entitled *Common-Sense Theology*. Published in 1922, this work met with a neglect which, I cannot help feeling, was not entirely undeserved. The price, 21s., had, of course, something to do with it. A man will sometimes give about half that sum for a book on philosophy by an established author, whose intellectual goods he has tried and approved in the past and is prepared to buy again in the reasonable expectation of getting the sort of thought he likes.

But I was not an established author, and to pay 21s. for a bundle of theories of doubtful validity from an unknown source is to buy a pig in a poke; so, at least, the public seemed to think. In the circumstances my only hope was the libraries. But here another difficulty arose. Not only was *Common-Sense Theology* not a work by an established author; it was not even written in an established form. In point of fact it was a Dialogue, and a Dialogue in which the characters never for one moment came alive. In justice to the author, it must be said that he never meant them to. "The dialogue," he says in his introduction, "is used solely as a device for ensuring brevity and lucidity in the exposition of ideas, and no attempt is made to convert the protagonists from mouthpieces of argument into creatures of flesh and blood." But though no attempt was made to achieve anything more dramatic than a play of ideas, it was inevitable that a certain liveliness should result.

When your characters speak in the ordinary language of every-day life, accusing one another of inconsistency, of question begging, and of other forms of intellectual incompetence, some loss of dignity there is bound to be. And *Common-Sense Theology* accordingly failed to achieve that solemnity of manner which is thought proper to works on philosophy whose scholarship and authority justly win for them the esteem of public librarians. Circumstances were thus against the book from the first, but I doubt if they were sufficient to account for its almost total failure.

For the book itself—in all humility I admit it—was not what it should have been. It set out to propound a theory of creative evolution, which envisaged life as a dynamic, spiritual activity appearing in an alien world of matter. Life, it was suggested, initially a blind, instinctive force, became in the course of its development purposive, and expressed itself in matter in order to further the fulfilment of its purpose. Life's expression or manifestation in matter takes the form of living organisms, which may be conceived in terms of the old-fashioned metaphor as moulds of matter animated by the breath of life.

It will be seen that, as opposed to the majority of the theories of creative or purposive evolution to which the twentieth century has given birth, the conception was frankly dualistic. Instead of trying to derive matter from life, or to regard life as a function of matter, it recognized both life and matter as fundamental cosmic principles and represented living organisms as the results of their interaction. In this respect it differed from the creative evolution of Bergson, and approximated more closely to the view advanced by Butler and subsequently elaborated by Shaw. In fact, the theory might have been regarded, as in my more ambitious moments I did regard it, as an attempt to provide

a metaphysical background for Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*. The undertaking proved, however, as was only to be expected, beyond my powers. Although I still feel convinced that only on the basis of a thorough-going dualism can we do justice to the infinite variety of life and nature, and that the theory outlined in *Common-Sense Theology* was to this extent on the right lines, I am only too conscious how inadequate was my presentation of it. I criticized great men for troubling themselves with problems which I brushed cheerfully aside, and left the marks of my trampling feet upon ground rightly eschewed by the more cautious steps of angels. Thus the book achieved an air of somewhat ingenuous simplicity by pointedly begging the questions which should have made it complicated.

In subsequent works, more particularly in *Matter, Life and Value*,* I have tried to make amends. I have come to terms with the difficulties which I formerly ignored, and done my best to fill in the outlines of the crude sketch that first appeared in *Common-Sense Theology*. In particular I have been driven by a consideration of ethics and of æsthetics to admit the existence of value as a third, fundamental factor in the universe, differing both from life and matter. Of this factor of value we obtain our first faint intimations in ethical and æsthetic experience, and I have suggested that it may be the purpose of the force that drives evolution forward, to evolve to a level at which it can achieve a continuous and untrammelled contemplation of that which it at present senses vaguely and intermittently in a material medium. Thus life, which begins as an unconscious force expressing itself in matter and occupied exclusively in the direction and knowledge of matter, will pass beyond the obstacle of the material world, which at present stands in its

* Oxford University Press, 18s.

path, and come to rest in contemplation of the world of value. Such, at least, I conceive to be the end which the experiment we call evolution is seeking to achieve.

But to return to *Common-Sense Theology*. The book was by no means confined to metaphysics. From time to time I digressed from my main theme, the elaboration of a theory of evolution, to work out the applications of the theory to various activities of the human spirit. What, I wanted to know, assuming the universe to work more or less on the lines suggested, was the bearing of the view I was putting forward upon artistic and literary criticism ; how did it affect current conceptions of beauty, of love, of the status of learning and of the function of education ? And so in various departments of human activity I set about applying what I called the Life Force metaphysic, and in the process arrived at certain conclusions which seemed to me to follow logically from my premises.

Now, though the presentation of the metaphysical theory may have been lamentable, the following out of its implications in the spheres I have mentioned seems to me to be not wholly lacking in interest. The conclusions at which I arrived with regard to æsthetic and literary criticism are still, I think, with certain qualifications to be mentioned later, in the main sound, and their presentation is, to say the least of it, not lacking in vigour. And since the arguments put forward, though germane to and in a real sense dependent upon my main metaphysical theory, fall outside the recognized sphere of philosophical discussion, and, since the high spirited treatment of the theme which the dialogue form seems to have provoked would be out of place in a more dignified work, I thought it would be a good plan to reprint my digressions into the spheres of art and literature and educational

theory as a separate work. This, through the courtesy of Messrs. Benn, I have been enabled to do, and the present book is the result.

I have made as few alterations as possible in the text of the earlier work, the substance of the following pages being reprinted very largely as it appeared in *Common-Sense Theology*. Since the publication of the earlier book, however, there is one important point upon which my views have changed. I no longer hold that the propagandist function which Anthony claims for literature and poetry can be assigned to music and painting. Indeed the significance which should be attributed to the formal arts and the criteria by which the value of pictures and musical compositions should be assessed, now seem to me to be quite different from those appropriate to those forms of expression which make use of words. On this point, then, the position taken up by Anthony in the present book no longer represents my own opinion, which is that of Professor Cameron.

A word of explanation may be added about the speakers in the Dialogue and the circumstances in which the discussion takes place. John and Anthony are residents at a philosophical college endowed by a wealthy manufacturer, who displays in his declining years that weakness for metaphysical speculation which so often attacks the systems of those who have spent their lives in dealing with hard facts. In violent reaction from the stomach and pocket view of life by which his activities have hitherto been governed, and recognizing that the existence of a leisured class absolutely independent and without obligations is the first condition alike of civilized living and original thinking, he has revived the patron system. A class from which you ask nothing is always liable to contain those who give most, and, as John and Anthony are not expected to produce anything in return for the

patronage by which they are maintained, there is at least a chance that they may produce something worth while. The only obligation upon residents of the College is that they should be available for the discussion of philosophical questions with any callers who may wish to consult them. As, however, might have been expected, their duties in this connection have not proved onerous. Mr. Banks, a retired business man, a friend of the founder of the College, is, indeed, one of the first to take advantage of the facilities offered. In his capacity as inquirer Mr. Banks has been sustaining an exposition by John of the theory of creative evolution to the tune of some hundred and fifty pages when the present book opens. In order to break the impact and distribute the weight of John's dialectic, which has hitherto descended upon him alone, he introduces an American Professor, Professor Cameron, to catechise John about his views. Professor Cameron's catechism takes the form not of a direct criticism of the theory itself, but of an examination of the implications which follow from it, and it is the pursuit of these implications into the fields of art, literature and education which forms the theme of the present book.

As Mr. Banks has invoked support, John feels entitled to do the same and introduces Anthony to develop the implications of his theory beyond the strictly metaphysical limits within which the discussion has hitherto been confined.

C. E. M. Joad.

Hampstead, 1929.

DIALOGUE

I

Life and Education

The Dialogue opens as follows :—

John, who has been engaged in expounding the Vitalist theory of Creative Evolution briefly sketched in the Introduction, is asked by his interlocutors, Mr. Banks (a business man desiring culture) and Professor Cameron (a Professor of Philosophy from an American University) to apply his theory to the elucidation of some of the stock problems of intellectual discussion.

He demurs on the ground of personal incompetence and proposes to introduce his colleague Anthony to undertake the job for him.

Mr. Banks : But surely this is running away : if your theory will not stand the test of experience, can you expect us to credit it ? If it will not apply, in what sense can it be true ?

John : I did not say that it would not apply. I said that I was not the man to apply it.

Professor Cameron : But surely, if you take it seriously . . .

John : I should apply it ? Not at all. Do you not admit the distinction between theory and practice, or, to be accurate, between the construction of a theory and its practical application ? Schopenhauer, who preached complete asceticism, was unable to control his temper or his appetites, loved comfort above all things and wine next to comfort. He was reproached for inconsistency, but wrongly. As a

philosopher, I may grasp intellectually the hidden meaning of the Universe, and portray the kind of life its comprehension demands ; but that does not put me under a greater obligation to live that life in my own person than in the case of another. He who drives black sheep need not himself be black, and nobody expects a geometrician to look like a triangle. Nor, if you insist on the word, is the philosopher alone in his inconsistency. Christianity is the official religion of all Western States, yet no State has yet had the courage to shut up its prisons, root out its lawyers, abolish its armies and navies, or perform any of the eminently salutary and sensible measures which a practical application of the doctrines of Christianity requires. Why, then, must the philosopher practise what he preaches ? Philosophers were never adepts at life : that is why they are of such small account in the world.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : But we are not asking you to practise, only to demonstrate the application of your theories to some facts of experience and aspects of thought.

JOHN : The distinction is one of degree, not of kind. You want me to define the special Life Force attitude to certain phases of existence. What, for instance, would a supporter of my theory have to say of education, what of morals ? What view of art, what canons of literary taste, would he be required to adopt ? These are the questions you would ask, and these questions I cannot answer ; for one thing I do not know enough about art and education ; for another, as I have already said, I am a philosopher and I am not concerned with practical applications.

(*John accordingly retires to return with Anthony.*)

ANTHONY : Good afternoon, gentlemen ! I understand that you wish to discuss the practical application of some of my friend's Vitalistic theories. The task is not an easy one, for the applications

have not been systematically worked out; but I shall be glad to put any ideas of mine at your service.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: We shall be most interested to hear them. Up to the present, however, we have only talked generalities with your friend here. Perhaps, then, it will be as well if I indicate at once the kind of question to which the application of his views seems to me to involve the greatest difficulty. Such a procedure will provide a starting point for our discussion, besides giving you an opportunity of throwing light upon matters which are at present obscure.

ANTHONY: Pray do so.

Statement of Objections to Life Force Theory

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Let me take, then, to illustrate my difficulties, the department of thought itself, the realm of pure reasoning, of which perhaps the most striking example is the field covered by mathematics. Now as I understand your friend's position, it is this—please correct me if I am wrong. The Life Force has created man for purposes of its own: it uses him as a weapon for the achievement of those purposes, and endows him accordingly with powers and faculties which he may use in its service. One of these faculties, we may suppose, is the faculty of reason. Now reason, working in accordance with laws which it prescribes for itself, discovers certain facts about the Universe; it discovers, for example, that seven times seven make forty-nine, or that it is impossible for a tree to be at the same time both a beech and not a beech.

Now reason regards these facts, so far at any rate as the facts of mathematics and the laws of logic are concerned, as unalterable and permanent: in

no Universe, however constituted, says reason, would it be possible for seven times seven to make fifty-one, or for a tree both to be and not to be a beech at the same moment. These facts, then, reason asserts to be independent of time, place and thought, and the knowledge of these facts reason calls truth. This, then, is the function of reason: to endeavour to establish truths about the Universe which are eternally and universally true, and to regard the accumulation of such truths with satisfaction as constituting an increase in knowledge. Now increased knowledge is a possession, a heritage which successive generations seek to increase and to hand on enriched, to their descendants. Thus we have a growing body of truths which are absolutely and entirely true, and we tend to invest them with some sentiment of value. Knowledge, then, is good just because it is permanent, is eternally the same and can never be impugned. Now what light does the view of reason required by your Life Force hypothesis, throw upon all this?

Will the Life Force theory apply to the realm of thought, to the activity and achievements of reason, the same analysis as that which it applies, let us say, to morality, to religion, or to political institutions? Will it insist on judging these achievements by the same standard?

ANTHONY: I am afraid I don't quite follow. What is this analysis, what is this standard?

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Well, your friend's theory, as far as I can gather, insists that the Life Force, having created us for purposes of its own, and having devised the machinery of the unconscious to apprise us of the direction in which it would have us travel, spurs us incessantly to new activities through the promptings of the host of impulses and instincts that spring from the unconscious. These impulses find themselves in continual

conflict with the moral standards established by the community in matters of conduct, and with the accepted dogmas that pass for the religion of the community in matters of belief. The impulses both to new modes of action and to new ways of thought endeavour, as it were, to break through this crust of creed and code, which seeks to confine them within the rigid framework of what has been approved in the past. When they do succeed in breaking through, the result is progress in morals and insight in religion ; there is, in fact, a general advance—the Life Force has gained ground. But it has only gained ground at the cost of the disruption of existing standards of conduct and structures of belief which, just in so far as the Life Force has succedeed in its new thrust forward, are thrown aside and consigned to the scrap heap of evolution.

We have, then, a constant opposition between the new and the old, between the dynamic and the static, between the continual promptings and thrustings of the Life Force and the laws, religion, morality, social observances, traditions, dogmas and prohibitions of society, which obstruct these promptings and endeavour to confine their manifestations in thought and action within the limits of the cast iron mould of what exists.

And just as this cast iron mould is itself the crystallized form which the promptings and thrustings of the past have assumed in the present, so will the dynamic urge of to-day, which is now seeking through the medium of a few men of genius to break the mould, become subject to a like fate, should it succeed in imposing itself upon the society of to-morrow. Just as red-hot lava cools and solidifies when once it has ceased to move, so does new thought which comes into the world like molten fluid grow hard and static when it ceases to be new : as it wins acceptance from the world

which once sought to suppress it, it solidifies and forms a crust. Rigidity is the penalty imposed by respectability, and the heresy which becomes the accepted standard for belief and conduct in the community loses both tolerance and elasticity as the price of success. Thus, the living beliefs of yesterday are petrified in the Church prayer books of to-day; the immoralities of to-day are enshrined in the Family Heralds of to-morrow.

Now through all this process it is perfectly clear that a definite scale of values is being erected. The achievements of the past are pilloried as the lumber of the future: whatever ordinance exists, whether it be a creed, a political constitution, a social prohibition or a law against unnatural vice, is regarded with an unfavourable eye as something which confuses, trammels and perverts the fresh and spontaneous thrustings of the Life Force. It appears that no institution, no belief, no social ordinance possesses absolute and permanent merit in its own right: it is at best useful as a milestone upon the road which humanity has to travel, and its usefulness is outlived so soon as the milestone is passed.

Is Truth changeless and Value constant?

Now the question which I wish this somewhat tedious exposition of your friend's views to bring out is this: Are we to extend this critical analysis, which amounts to a general defamation of the old and the existing in art and society, in morals and belief, to cover the more specifically rational activities of thought? Bearing in mind my preliminary remarks with regard to the positive achievements of thought in the past and the slow

accumulation of that priceless possession which is human knowledge, are we to regard these too as so much obstructive lumber, whose only function is to block the pathway to new discoveries and to impede the course of evolution ? Are the absolute truths of logic and mathematics not absolutely, but only relatively, true, or, worse still, are they not true at all, or, if indeed they be still true, are they impediments to the vision of greater and deeper truths ? Are the standards of artistic taste laid down by the Greeks to be deemed inimical to art, or the principles of jurisprudence established by the Romans injurious to justice, just because their intrinsic merit has forced all succeeding ages to accept them ? Or, to put a more extreme case, does the merit of such a writer as Shakespeare diminish by the mere lapse of time, simply because his work has caught and crystallized the æsthetic impulses of the past instead of embodying those of the present ? And is Shakespeare then to be forbidden to our young, on the ground that the admiration which he cannot but extort from them will cramp and repress their own creative impulses ?

This last is surely absurd. And yet if the doctrine of the Life Force does not force us to such a lamentable conclusion, if it does not compel us to write down the truth that two and two make four as relative and the merit of Shakespeare as ephemeral, on what principle, may I ask, are we to distinguish some of the conclusions of reason and to accept some of the achievements of knowledge as endowed with absolute validity and truth, while impugning others as possessing value which endures only for a time and is relative to a specific purpose ? Useful, it is admitted, these latter may once have been, and yet, according to your friend Mr. John, if they be allowed to claim human allegiance and respect beyond their allotted period, they will come to render great disservice to the

progress of evolution in the future than the service they rendered in the days when they enshrined the latest promptings of the Life Force.

ANTHONY : These are difficult questions you have asked me, and they go to the heart of the whole Vitalist hypothesis. In so far as they raise such questions as the validity of reasoning, the nature of truth and so forth, their import is primarily philosophical, and my friend John would be more competent to tackle them than I. But I understood that the matters you wished to discuss related mainly to the application of the Life Force metaphysic to certain specific problems. And it is from this point of view that I think I can most appropriately deal with the chief question you have raised. That question I understand to be as follows : What is the bearing of the Life Force hypothesis upon the value men attribute to mental achievement and the belief they have in the existence of definite knowledge ? Is there, you ask, absolute value in Plato's Republic, or absolute truth in Newton's law of gravitation ? If there is not, isn't it rather shocking ? If there is, how are we to reconcile such a conception with our notion of the Life Force as proceeding by the method of trial and error, and throwing up geniuses whose most remarkable products have relative value only, the value, that is, of means, or stepping stones to an end whose realization will render them superfluous ?

That I think is one of the forms in which your question presents itself.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Certainly it does !

The Academic Mind

ANTHONY : I think I shall succeed best in my attempt to indicate the view I should wish to take

of this matter by describing a certain attitude of mind which seems to me to embody a wrong conception of thought and of its achievements. For brevity's sake I will call this attitude of mind "academic," and the mind which possesses it "the academic mind." I do not mean to imply that all those who hold academic posts have academic minds, or that the academic mind is not to be found outside schools or universities. Far from it. I use the phrase merely because its associations render it a convenient "short title" for an attitude of mind which I propose to exhibit as antagonistic to the purposes of life. The phrase will serve to illustrate my theme in two ways. In the first place the academic mind takes an erroneous view of the purpose and function of thought; and in the second place, by so doing, it makes of itself an obstruction to the Life Force and tends to impede the accomplishment of its purpose.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: But surely the phrase "academic mind" is merely a term of popular contempt. It is used of scholars and pedants, who, lost in the dust and dry bones of the theories of the past, take no heed of the world of the present. I don't know that the term has ever meant very much, just because the senses in which it is used are so many; certainly it has often been undeservedly applied. I fail to see, therefore, how you can regard the term and the hazy conception for which it stands as significant for the exposition of your theory.

ANTHONY: Some examples may serve to make my meaning clearer. May I ask, did you ever in your University days read Aristotle's Poetics?

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Yes, I did certainly.

ANTHONY: You will remember, then, a theory of Aristotle's as to the function of tragedy. Tragedy purges our souls of pity and terror by exciting these emotions over the misfortunes of fictitious

personages presented on the stage: hence the pleasure afforded by tragedy provides, as it were, a safety valve for surplus emotions which would become inconvenient if unable to find such outlets.

The theory is in intriguing one, and at once suggests the question, "Is it true?" You will not, I suspect, be surprised when I remind you that that was the one question that was never raised. Undergraduates have written innumerable essays, dons have delivered innumerable lectures on this theory of Aristotle's, but whether it is true or not is the last thing that it occurs to anyone to discuss. There were, however, a number of rival hypotheses, each supported by a wealth of scholarship, including references to other works by Aristotle, comparisons out of other authors and so forth, as to what it was precisely that Aristotle meant to convey by his theory. Did he, for example, conceive of the purgation effected by tragedy as a purely physiological process, the drawing off, as it were, of black bile which, if allowed to accumulate, causes melancholia, or was his theory to be interpreted as a metaphor by analogy from the physiological process? Or, again, were both these interpretations too obvious, a moral uplifting and purification of the emotions—what the psychoanalysts would call a sublimation—being really intended?

Professor Cameron: Yes, I do remember something of the sort. I was always a black bile man myself.

Anthony: Well, what does this subordination of the real interest of the theory to a secondary, fictitious and literary interest portend? Why all this trouble to discover, not what you or I thought or ought to think about the theory, but what Aristotle thought? It is, is it not, a sacrifice of substance to form a postponing of the question of fact to the question of scholarship. And it is just this sacrifice of substance to form that seems to me to be typical of the academic mind throughout.

The academic mind takes the thoughts of the great men of the past, and instead of sifting the gold from the dross, testing them in the light of modern research and weighing them in the scales of modern discovery, swallows them whole, takes their unchanging value for granted, and devotes an infinity of patience, erudition and scholarship to the work of textual emendation and criticism, with a view to discovering not whether the substance is sound, but whether the form is intact.

Thus you can never obtain from an academic mind its own opinion on any controversial question : it will tell you what Aristotle thought, or what Mr. X thinks Aristotle thought, or what Mr. Y proves that he must have thought, and give excellent reasons for its view on each point : but with the question, " What do you think yourself ? " it is not concerned.

The meaning, the content of the theory, all that was once living and vital in it, have become subordinated to the form ; the inspiration of the Life Force has become smothered by the vehicle by means of which that inspiration was conveyed. It is as if men were to treasure and to hand down to posterity a nut containing a kernel beyond price, and posterity repaid them by going into ecstasies of admiration over the husk.

This characteristic of the academic mind, its subordination of substance to form, which now begins to emerge, may be traced through endless ramifications. Let me take another example of a rather different kind.

Its View of the State

Discussing the origins of the State, philosophers have surmised that primitive man, finding a state

of lawless freedom intolerably insecure, formed society for his own protection ; he preferred, as Plato puts it, to surrender his own power of doing injustice to others on condition that they should be made to exercise a similar forbearance towards himself. Thus, instead of personal violence and the right of the stronger which had hitherto reigned supreme, law, which was based upon the corporate force of society, became the arbiter in affairs between man and man. Society then, or the State, was made by man to serve his own interests because society suited him.

Now observe the steps by which the State which was made for man grew to dominate him who made it, the steps by which form came to triumph over substance. Greek philosophers, observing that it was only by contact with his fellow men that a man could develop his full nature, only by living in society that he could realize all that he had it in him to be, came to regard the individual as owing a permanent debt or obligation to society, arising from the mere circumstance of his being a member of it. German philosophers carried the notion a stage further, until in Hegel the State takes on a real being or substance of its own, becoming a sort of super-individual with a General Will and attributes which Hegel does not hesitate to call divine. The State is representative of the wills of all the contracting individuals who compose it ; therefore it can never act contrary to those wills, which is to say that it can never be unjust or tyrannical. The State is the source of all that is highest and noblest in the individual's nature ; it may, therefore, unhesitatingly call for the exercise of that capacity for self-sacrifice which it has itself implanted in the individual's breast. The ideal of the individual should be to merge his will in that of the State ; his virtue to throw aside all considerations of self and place himself

unhesitatingly at the State's service whenever, in the State's view, occasion for such sacrifice arises. For is not the State after all simply the individual in another form, or rather, a glorified edition of all that is unselfish and noble in the individual's nature ? Thus we arrive at the conclusion that the well-being of the State is of greater importance than that of the individuals who compose it, that in fact man was made for the State instead of the State, as we had fondly supposed, being made for man. Thus the fresh and vital doctrine that individuals cannot live alone but must come together into a community, a doctrine sprung direct from some prompting of the Life Force which felt that its purpose could only be achieved by the co-operation of individuals in society, is transformed into the dogma that society alone has absolute value, and that man exists only for the purpose of rendering it service : another instance, you perceive, of the triumph of form over substance, of the institution, which was the form in which the living idea expressed itself, over the individuals who conceived the idea and created the institution.

Mr. Banks : I am sure this is all very interesting, Mr. Anthony, but I fail to see its connection with the questions which my friend Professor Cameron put to you. I hope you are proposing to answer those questions.

Anthony : Please bear with me just a little longer, and the drift of these apparently discursive remarks will, I hope, begin to reveal itself. Professor Cameron's questions do not admit of a direct answer, at any rate not immediately. I must pursue the method of the impressionists, and sketch in vague and general outline the position I wish to take up, with a view to filling in the details afterwards. It is only when the details are filled in that you will discover the relevance and catch

the meaning of the whole. I hope, Professor Cameron, you will pardon the method for all its seeming irrelevance ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : By all means. Please continue.

ANTHONY : In resuming then, let me repeat that the attitude of the academic mind is harmful in two respects. In the first place it maintains an attitude of hostility to each new development in thought that springs from the Life Force ; in the second, it constitutes in itself an obstruction to the purposes of the Force by freezing its living experiments into static immobility.

Now these attributes of the academic mind may be observed throughout the whole field of human intellectual activity.

Its Effect upon the Professions

The academic mind is, for example, rampant in the professions. Some particular department of human knowledge, knowledge of the law for example, or of the diseases of the human body and the ways of curing them, is cornered by a small body of men, whose livelihood depends not only upon their own ability for adjusting disputes and healing infirmities, but also upon the admitted inability of anyone not possessing the peculiar training and outlook which is characteristic of the profession in question to do the same.

It is important that the doctor should be able to cure the sick man ; but it is even more important that another should not cure him where the doctor has failed. In fact, if the choice could be presented to him, the average practitioner would in his heart prefer that the patient should die under his treatment, rather than that he should recover

under the unauthorized treatment of an unqualified person.

The substance of medicine is the healing of the sick ; the form of medicine is the code of prescribed rules and methods, by means of which the wisdom of the past has shown that the sick can normally be healed. But where the form triumphs over the substance, the importance of following prescribed rule and method comes to overshadow the importance of healing. " It is better to die through following the rules than to recover through violating them," says Doctor Bahis in *L'Amour medecin*. That the remark was sufficiently near the truth to be greeted as a caricature and not as a libel is the measure of the prevalence of the academic mind, and of the triumph of form over matter in the medical profession. And when Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington, in the *Doctor's Dilemma*, is shocked to have to report that he has " actually known a man die of a disease from which he was, scientifically speaking, immune," it is at once recognized that he is more concerned at the inconsiderateness of fact in putting form out of countenance, than at the unexpected death of a patient whom it was his business to keep alive.

The encroachment of form upon substance in the legal profession is too notorious to require illustration. The substance of law is to see justice done : the form of law is to secure the victory of that particular party which happens to have employed your services. It is perhaps natural that the lawyer should wish to enhance his reputation by restoring to their relations thieves who can afford his fees, but such a performance implies, in the case at least of those whose guilt is known to him, just that sacrifice of justice to personal advantage which the establishment of law was designed to preclude.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: I hardly think you should press these instances too strongly. I am not, of course, aware as yet of the conclusions you are proposing to draw, though I begin to see the direction in which your instances are tending. But this professionalism among doctors and lawyers is rather economic in tendency than symptomatic of any fundamental attitude of mind. Both doctors and lawyers depend upon their technical knowledge for their livelihood, and like all bodies of skilled practitioners, whether workers by brain or by hand, form a trade union which must resist to the uttermost blacklegging by persons outside the charmed circle. If persons who do not possess the necessary diplomas and credentials of the profession aspire, and aspire successfully, to do what the professional does, the latter's special knowledge will lose its market value, and, as a result, the professional himself will lose his livelihood. Hence the opposition of the medical profession to such a man as Barker, the bonesetter. It was not that the profession denied the efficacy of his methods or regretted their success, but they did deprecate the performance by an outsider of mysteries to which only the initiated should aspire. Where an outsider can do well what the insider can do badly, the result not only reflects badly upon the insider, but diminishes the value and importance of being an insider at all.

And as the insider is normally too overworked at curing the sick by methods which were up to date in his day to keep up to date himself, he either fails to realize that his own methods are superseded, or, if he does realize it, his knowledge that he has neither the time nor the opportunity to master new developments, which bid fair to supersede him, makes him naturally conservative and suspicious of innovation.

It is to this feeling, then, that I attribute the

conservatism of the professions. Their hostility to what is unorthodox, their slavish adherence to rules involving even, in extreme cases, an admission that it is better to kill by authorized methods than to cure by unauthorized ones, is due, I think, not so much to a natural tendency to subordinate substance to form, as to a refusal to countenance any innovation which might threaten their own economic position.

MR. BANKS : Hear, hear ! It's all a question of trusts and monopolies. Doctors have a monopoly of medicine just as parsons have of God. You can't get a parson to admit the arguments of an agnostic, because his salary depends on his not letting the agnostic refute him ; and you can't get an ordinary doctor to look kindly on psychoanalysis or autosuggestion because their success would make him superfluous. All this is not a question of the Life Force at all ; it is a question of bread and butter.

ANTHONY : But is it ? I agree that your explanation covers many of the facts. I might agree that it covered all of them, were it not that precisely the same tendency can be discerned in other fields which are unaffected by the influence of economics. If you will allow me, then, I will carry my analysis of what I have called the academic mind a stage further.

We have considered the professions ; let us take a glance at education. Now what do you take the object of education to be ?

Education. Its Object according to the Official View

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Education has many objects, but this I take to be the most important : so

to train the mind and faculties of the child that he may leave his school equipped at all points to face the world, and to take his place therein as a man and a citizen.

ANTHONY : This training of mind and faculties will not necessarily involve, will it, the assimilation of knowledge for its own sake ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Oh, yes ! There are certain things that a child must know.

ANTHONY : His A B C, reading, writing and the multiplication table, for instance ? I agree, of course ! But these things are not so much education as instruments for the acquisition of education, the means without which education cannot be obtained. But as to education itself, we shall insist, I take it, on a child learning things only in so far as the process of learning, and it may be of thinking, trains the child's mind for the performance of those functions you referred to just now, and not primarily for the sake of the knowledge which the learning brings.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Some knowledge is valuable to the child for itself. It should be in part the business of education to transmit the inherited culture of the race, in order that each generation, instead of starting with a clean slate, may begin the pursuit of knowledge and the journey of evolution where its predecessors left off. If it were not so, if parents and teachers deliberately forewent the knowledge of the past, and insisted on presenting every subject as an open question upon which the child might make up its mind one way or the other, irrespective of the facts gleaned by its predecessors, education would degenerate into a wearisome repetition of the same process generation after generation, and the possibility of progress, which must surely consist in building upon the foundations which have already been laid, would be put out of court.

In my view the present can only rise upon the shoulders of the past, the future upon the shoulders of the present. In order that this may be accomplished, it is necessary that the teacher should impart definite information to the child under the name of knowledge, and should use his influence to mould the child's mind along lines that have been approved by the wisdom of antiquity. After all, our parents were not always wrong ; why then should we forego the knowledge which their experience taught them in teaching our children ?

ANTHONY : I expected that you would take that view. It is characteristic of the academic mind.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Surely you are not imputing to me this mental attitude which you regard as so obstructive to the purposes of the Life Force ? My mind moves ; it is not static.

ANTHONY : Nevertheless, I hold that the attitude to education which you have just expressed is one of the most unmistakable characteristics of the academic mind, and that it expresses itself in a vicious subordination of substance to form.

To excuse myself from the charge of dogmatic rudeness, I had better indicate the reasons why, to my mind, this view of education is erroneous. These reasons will, at the same time, serve to give a general idea of the connection which I wish to establish between the academic mind and the theory of the Life Force : for my objection to your view is briefly this : that, by perpetuating and exhibiting as an object for the child's admiration what is old, it hampers the expression of what is creative and new, and encourages what is possessive and conservative.

I. What is the Culture which Education Transmits?

I think that three rather different objections may be brought against your theory of education, and the first objection is this. You said that it is the purpose of education, at any rate in part, to transmit to posterity the inherited culture of the race. But what is the inherited culture of the race? Your theory assumes that there are in existence a definite body of established knowledge in the special sciences, an agreed and authoritative view of the history of the world, and certain criteria of artistic and literary value which are constant and unchallenged.

Nothing of the sort appears to me to exist. I hope to enlarge upon this point later when I return to your main contention that the Life Force theory precludes the possibility of a permanent standard of value, and rejects the notion of ascertained truth. For the moment, however, it is sufficient for me to demonstrate to what, in the absence of any definite and accepted body of knowledge, this business of transmitting the inherited culture of the race in practice reduces itself.

Education in History

(*a*) In the first place, take history. It is a notorious fact, upon which it is unnecessary to enlarge, that each nation selects those historical events which redound to its own credit, and omits or glosses over those which present it in a less favourable light. English histories, for example, while expatiating upon the glories of the campaigns of

Henry V, dismiss almost in a paragraph the series of discreditable reverses which led to the all but complete loss of France by the English in the reign of Henry VI.

The various extant accounts of the battle of Waterloo typify a tendency which they may almost be said to burlesque. The facts about the battle of Waterloo are known in considerable detail ; yet careful arrangement and selection succeed in presenting them in an entirely different light to the children of England, of France and of Germany. The ordinary English boy believes that the Prussians played hardly any part in the victory, the ordinary German boy that the British were on the point of defeat when they were saved by the heroism of Blücher. The French are taught that only a series of misfortunes so incredibly prolonged as to savour of the supernatural, and in any event totally beyond the range of human foresight, could have turned a victory otherwise inevitable, and even as it was all but realized, into defeat.

This subjective interpretation of history colours all our teaching, and the importance of history is insisted upon, not because it is desired to inculcate a knowledge of the facts, but because a sagacious selection of historical truth makes excellent propaganda from the point of view of the State. A proper acquaintance with the glories of his own country and the corresponding defects of every other, a rendering of the past which portrays in glowing colours the achievements of the fatherland and dwells upon the defeats and humiliations of nations which were venturesome enough to cross its path, which presents every quarrel between States as one in which justice was permanently embodied in the cause of the favoured country, while its enemies were permanently actuated by the meanest motives of cupidity, arrogance or revenge, transform these

children of yours, who are to face the future enriched by the priceless knowledge of the past, into fierce little nationalists who are ready enough to adopt any parrot cry such as " The White Man's Burden," or " The Spread of Civilization," as an excuse for extending the power of their own land over so-called backward peoples, and conscientiously pocketing the proceeds of their enterprise. It is a knowledge of history which enables them to defend such activities on the best possible grounds, and to plead national necessity as a cloak for national aggrandisement.

On analysis, then, we find that this inherited culture of the race, which it is the business of education to transmit to the child, varies considerably according to the country to which the child happens to belong, and instead of presenting him with an agreed body of knowledge, aims at inculcating that peculiar set of facts and ideas whose dissemination among the young is advantageous to the government of the country and of the day. The result is that a man's view of the past comes to depend upon the bedroom in which he happens to have been born, and has the limited and partial characteristics which such a circumscribed environment might be expected to bestow.

In Politics, Economics and Religion

(*b*) What is true of the teaching of history is true also of the teaching of economics, of political science, of religion, of morals, and indeed of all branches of education which involve more than a simple recital of brute fact.

If history inculcates ideas which are convenient to the Government in relation to other Governments, economics and political science are devoted

to producing a mentality which is convenient to the Government in relation to its own working classes.

The comparative merits of democracy and aristocracy are urged *ad nauseam* in the essays of our public schoolboys, but they are not asked to write on Communism as a possible alternative to Capitalism. While the French Revolution—the effects of which have been rendered innocuous by lapse of time—is seriously studied in our history schools, the Russian Revolution, which is still alive and therefore menacing, is rarely mentioned. Writers on political theory whose views were revolutionary a hundred years ago, like those of Rousseau or Tom Paine, are admitted ; but the works of Lenin, or even of Bertrand Russell, which have a disintegrating tendency to-day, are eschewed.

Instead, therefore, of embarking upon an impartial study of politics and economics, what children in practice absorb under the name of education are certain theories of economics and certain aspects of politics, namely, those theories and aspects which make out a case for the maintenance of society on its established basis, and seek to console instead of to inflame the working classes.

Take one more department of education : education in religion, which is called divinity. Now religion is in the last resort one of a number of metaphysical theories. Metaphysics considers the ultimate constitution of the Universe : it asks whether any fundamental underlying unity can be detected or inferred behind the manifold appearances of apparently disconnected things. It may come to the conclusion, at which Kant arrived, that it is not possible for us to have knowledge of what it is that underlies the world of appearances, and that, if a unity does exist, it transcends the

possibilities of experience : its nature must therefore remain unknown. Or it may decide that it is possible to have such knowledge, but that the knowledge reveals not the presence but the absence of unity : that there is, in fact, nothing in the Universe except those entities which are known to science and psychology, whose existence may be discovered by experiment and analysis, and that any attempt to endow the Universe with unity, purpose or design, can result only in a convenient fiction founded not upon the evidence, but upon the promptings of our own desires. On this hypothesis events will proceed mechanically as a result of the operations of the law of cause and effect, or their occurrence may be a series of coincidences, the outcome of pure chance ; in either event there is no meaning in asking why a particular thing happens, since there is no reason for its happening. Or, yet again, metaphysics may hold that a unity may be discerned, but only to provide us with diverse conjectures as to the nature of that unity. It may be impersonal like Bergson's *élan vital*, or personal and malignant like the Mephistophelian conception of God in Goethe's *Faust*, or personal and well intentioned but limited like the god of Mr. H. G. Wells, or personal and omnipotent like the god of the theologians.

Now, where metaphysics supplies us with a multiplicity of views as to the real nature and purpose of the Universe, each of which can adduce in its support evidence which has appealed to many as convincing and to some as conclusive, what does religion do ? It seizes upon one of these hypotheses, the hypothesis of an omnipotent, benevolent deity, and under the name of divinity instils it into the minds of the young as ascertained and unquestioned truth. The numerous other views, to some of which I have briefly referred, are either not mentioned, or are mentioned only to be treated

with contempt and loathing, so that in the process of receiving the inherited culture of the race, the young mind is brought to believe that to hold any view other than the one that has been imposed upon it under the name of religion, is a heresy, a blasphemy, and a crime, of which those who are guilty are outside the pale of decent society in this world and condemned to eternal damnation in the next. Thus do our teachers supply the place of ignorance by converting the conjectures of the sages into dogmas of their own, dogmas which are used to cramp, not to enrich, the minds of their charges under the sounding title of inherited knowledge and culture.

I speak of religion as though there were but one, but how infinite are the creeds that go by that name ! If the teaching of religion involves the arbitrary selection of one from a number of metaphysical hypotheses, and its erection into a dogma ready chewed for digestion by weak mental stomachs, is not the selection of one from a number of different religions equally arbitrary ? Does it not involve an equally illegitimate departure from that strictly impartial communication of the inherited culture of the race which you believe it to be the object of education to undertake ?

Where the wisest have doubted the existence of God, religion insists that there is a God ; where the most devout have disputed about His nature, quarrelled about His attributes and entertained different opinions with regard to His relations to the world and to the children, if any, He has begotten, the teaching of divinity in this and in every other civilized country asserts His character in definite terms, catalogues His attributes, and does not hesitate to affirm precise details as to His paternity and the motives with which He undertook it.

Thus the inherited culture of the race, which is

transmitted under the name of divinity, assumes various and arbitrary forms, which are again found to depend upon topographical considerations. If a child is born in India, he is endowed with the priceless heritage of the metaphysical wisdom of the past in the form of Buddhism or Brahminism, if in Arabia he learns Mohammedanism, if in Germany Christianity, if in China Confucianism. Nowhere is he presented with an unbiassed survey of this realm of bitter controversy, informed of the various alternatives that may be entertained, furnished with the main arguments for and against possible hypotheses, and allowed to make a free choice according to the dictates of his temperament and the weight of the evidence.

The consequence is that he holds certain creeds to be superior to others, not because he has compared them on merits, but simply because he happens to hold them, just as he regards his own nation and family as better than those of his neighbour simply because he happens to belong to them ; the natural result being that the world is rent with the feuds and dissensions of those who clamorously urge the paramount superiority of the opinions they have been taught, the nation into which they have been born, the ready-made customs and codes they have assimilated, and the god they have invented. Thus, what you call the inherited culture of the past is nationalized and sectionalized to suit the private interests of parents, priests and Governments.

Mr. Banks : What would you have men taught if they are to be denied history and economics, political science and morals, and are to eschew religion like the devil ?

The Teaching of Philosophy

ANTHONY : Why, Philosophy, of course. For it is Philosophy that invites us to consider as open the questions which religion regards as closed.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Then you would look to the teaching of Philosophy to transmit the culture of the race and to hand on the inherited wisdom of the past ?

ANTHONY : I would scarcely put it like that. To do so implies that there is a definite body of philosophical knowledge which has received more or less general acceptance among philosophers and which can be transmitted to the student. But it is the business of Philosophy, as I conceive it, not to supply us with knowledge so much as to disabuse us of the knowledge which we falsely conceive ourselves to possess. The thought of the ordinary man is limited by the prejudices of common sense ; in fact it consists of those prejudices, and as a result he takes for granted this mysterious business of living. It does not stimulate him to questioning and curiosity ; for him it is—it is obvious—a perfectly commonplace affair. He thinks that he knows all that there is to know about the world, because he mistakes for the world the prison house of custom that his prejudices have made for him. To knock down the walls of the prison of common sense is to give the prisoner a new horizon. He passes into a larger world in which, although the number of things that are known has diminished, the number of those that are surmised is enormously increased, a world in which nothing is certain, yet almost anything is possible. Hence the effect of Philosophy is not to fill the mind so much as to open it. It is like a harrow which ploughs up the surface of the soul and lays it bare to the chance seeds that may fall

from the minds of others and the inspiration of its own unconscious. It does not directly enrich the mind, but it enables the mind to enrich itself.

But—and this is the conclusion of these discursive remarks—it does not transmit anything, in the sense in which you use the term, when you speak of transmitting the inherited culture of the race.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : But even if we conceive the function of Philosophy on your lines, surely a knowledge of the great systems of the past is essential to its proper performance ? You must know something of Plato and Kant if you are to philosophize properly.

ANTHONY : Granted. But a knowledge of Plato and Kant is for the philosopher what a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic is for the child. Such knowledge does not confer education, it forges a weapon whereby education may be acquired. The systems of Plato and Kant perform a similar function ; they are studied and studied intensively, not because they are necessarily thought to be true, but because they are the best possible introduction to the methods of Philosophy and the problems with which it is concerned.

However, I must not be tempted into too long a digression on the nature and function of Philosophy, and it is time that I returned to my main theme.

Before proceeding to my second argument against your conception of the function of education, I had, perhaps, better summarize briefly the position I have taken up in my first, which has, I fear, been somewhat discursive.

Summary of Preceding Arguments

My first contention is, then, that education, instead of being, as Professor Cameron would

have us believe, a method of handing on to the young the inherited culture of the race and the accumulated wisdom of the past, degenerates in practice into the deliberate casting of the child's mind into a mould which has been formed for the manufacture of good citizens. By a good citizen is meant, among other things, a trustworthy supporter of the State, society and the Church. I maintain that this contention is true whatever department of learning you choose to consider, whether it be history, or economics, or politics, or divinity, and that education in these subjects consists in the presentation to the child of certain dogmas with regard to God, democracy, representative government or whatever the subject may be, in the guise of established truths. With regard to these dogmas I assert two things. In the first place they are hypotheses masquerading as truths ; in the second place those hypotheses only are selected, which tend to produce in the child a mental complexion convenient from the point of view of the State, conventional from that of society and orthodox from that of religion. As a consequence the teacher distorts the child's mind by presenting a partial aspect of the truth as the whole of truth, and designedly gives it a twist which will influence its outlook for the remainder of its life. I say that the teacher imposes a partial aspect of truth as a substitute for the whole of truth, but even that statement is rating the effect of education too highly : it is true certainly that what we teach is partial, but equally is it true that it is not truth.

It is hypothesis hypostatized into dogma ; it only pretends to be knowledge. You call this pretended knowledge the heritage of the past, when it consists of little more than the errors and speculations of the past. And here I wish to make a further point which constitutes my second main argument against your theory of education.

II. Does Agreed Knowledge Exist?

I have criticized the teaching of history, of economics, and of religion on the ground that it does not convey to the young that body of agreed knowledge, that accumulation of the wisdom of mankind's past, which, according to your view, education should convey. And I quarrel with your view of education not so much because I think it can or ought to do these things, but just in so far as I deny that such an accumulation of agreed knowledge exists. If, then, it does not exist, it cannot be handed on. It is, in fact, just this imposition upon mankind of the speculations of the past, as the constant, immutable and unchallenged truths of the present, which is obstructive to the purposes of the Life Force, since it leads men to accept the so-called knowledge discovered by others, instead of setting them to work to discover knowledge for themselves. Present a man with his mental furniture ready made, and he will be content to sit on it: put a man in an empty house, and he will set his wits to work to construct furniture to make it habitable, an arrangement which is superior not only because what he makes for himself is likely to suit him better than what he takes ready made from others, but because his wits are sharpened and his faculties refined in the process.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: But surely you are not going to maintain that there are no universally accepted truths which may be safely presented to the young *as* truths; there is no end to the stock of human knowledge. What about Newton's law of gravitation for instance, or the date of the battle of Waterloo?

ANTHONY: Oh, if you mean facts, of course I agree; but I thought that the mere recital of brute fact had been abandoned as a theory of education

long ago. I understand that we now try to form minds, not to fill them. And as for Newton and gravitation, what about Einstein and relativity ?

Newton is, indeed, a case in point. He illustrates my position, by showing that even so called laws, which have passed for centuries unchallenged by mankind, become sooner or later open to question. But leave the world of fact and consider the world of ideas : for it is ideas which give a man his outlook on life, form his mind, mould his character and supply the content of his culture. Is there any single idea which has come down to us from the past which may pass unchallenged ? Is war an unmixed evil, or is it good in so far as it imparts a bracing influence to nations enervated by excess of peace ; or is perpetual peace an unqualified blessing ? Is democracy the only suitable form of government for states, or does its loss in efficiency more than counterbalance its gain in political experience and expression ? Is the loss of efficiency inevitable ?

Or take morals. Is there an absolute standard of right and wrong ? Is it sometimes right to punish, or is punishment simply a pretentious name given by spiteful people to their vengeance ? Is virtue intrinsic and unique, or is it simply an offshoot of vanity, the habit of acting in a manner which others will praise ? Is a man free to pursue his own happiness, or ought he sometimes to sacrifice it to the greatest happiness of the greatest number ? Ought he always to desire this greatest happiness of the greatest number ?

Or take economics. Is capitalism the only possible form of organization for a civilized country, or can it be effectively replaced by State Socialism or even by Communism ? Is the motive of social service a sufficiently powerful driving force to get the work of the world done, or must it be strengthened by the incentive of personal gain ? Could

people be induced to share equally, or will those of greater capacity insist on acquiring greater possessions ? Should land be nationalized under the State or become parcelled out in small holdings ?

These, you will agree, are fundamental questions. They are just the questions, to which the answers would naturally form the bulk of that stock of humanity's knowledge which education should hand on to posterity, if such a stock of knowledge existed. It does not exist, and it is because it does not that education can never fulfil this function which you regard as its *raison d'être*.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : You have chosen your examples well ; but you have chosen them well only in the sense that they support your position : in other words, you have chosen them unfairly. Clearly religion and politics belong to the realm of opinion and of controversy ; they are not subjects on which it is possible to have certain knowledge. It is equally clear that on many subjects such knowledge is possible. You mentioned history some little time back, and historical knowledge, the knowledge, for example, of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, clearly exists. Education can instil such knowledge into the minds of the young, and familiarity with the errors of the past will assist them to avoid those errors in conducting the affairs of the future.

What is Historical Truth ?

ANTHONY : I disagree again. There is no such thing as agreed, historical truth. I referred just now to the form which the teaching of history assumes in our schools, and pointed out that a partial and biassed view was presented to the

children, with the object of imparting to their minds a healthy, nationalist complexion, varying in tone with the sympathies of the State to which they happen to belong.

I think you agreed with me then, that the teaching of history as I described it consisted in a subjective interpretation of fact, an interpretation of a special kind conditioned by special interests, and not in an impartial record of objective fact.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : I agreed that the teaching of history was, as a matter of practice, often of this kind, not that it must necessarily be so. What you described is a perversion of education, not education.

ANTHONY : I understand your qualification, but cannot accept it. What I now want to maintain is that the teaching of history must always and necessarily be as I described it, simply because there is no objective body of historical truth to transmit. I am arguing, in fact, that history as education can never be radically different from history as it is taught to-day.

Let us consider for a moment of what the record of history consists. I think that on analysis what is commonly called historical truth may be found to consist of two rather different things.

(*a*) In the first place there is what we may call the historian's general impression. This general impression may be of a period, a people, an outstanding personality or an important historical event. It will be composed of a number of different factors, and will vary according to the degree of weight assigned to each of these varying factors.

In any given series of events, one historian, or it may be a school of historians, will look for the determining factor in the interplay of economic motives, the desire to obtain command of a trade route, or to acquire preferential rights in undeveloped territories, the necessity for finding

fresh markets for exports, or obtaining an outlet on the sea. This kind of interpretation is very fashionable among historians to-day. Another will emphasize the element of court intrigue ; the king decides on an expedition because he desires a certain mistress ; Aspasia instigates Pericles to go to war with Sparta because the Megarians have carried off one of her favourite women. Dark forces working in the background determine the policy of the court and hence of the nation ; historians delight to pry into the darkness, and to emerge therefrom triumphant with intelligent conjecture.

Others again have a penchant for explaining foreign policy in terms of internal affairs. The Government makes war to distract men's attention from mismanagement at home ; Athens is full of unemployed seamen with revolutionary tendencies ; go to war with Sparta and you will find a convenient outlet for their energies !

These and many other strands go to the making of so-called historical truth, and the truth will vary according as one or another is judged to be of greater importance. And in giving weight to these various factors the historian will be guided by the peculiarities of his temperament and the direction of his bias. It is a commonplace that the personal factor counts in the historian, but this commonplace is only half the truth : every word of that written interpretation of the past that we call history is conditioned by the nature and interests of the man who writes it. Instead of being a record of events, it is a record of the attitude of a man's mind to events, and that mind will select, omit, give emphasis here, belittle importance there, will even on occasions unconsciously distort, in order to present a picture which will harmonize with the writer's conception of the Universe and of man. It is not the perspective of history that

provides our conception of human nature ; it is our conception of human nature that makes our perspective of history.

So far I have illustrated my point by a writer's general impression of a period. With regard to the character of prominent personalities, it is too obvious to require stressing. There is no historical portrait of Julius Cæsar or of Napoleon ; there is only bitter controversy, involving estimates so different that Cæsar may be represented with equal plausibility as a seer or an adventurer, Napoleon as a god or a mountebank.

This part of history then is riddled with subjectivity, and it is the major part. Strip history of its element of subjectivity and it becomes a bare record of brute fact ; for the second part of written history is nothing but a catalogue of names and dates. And this brings me at last to my third argument against Professor Cameron. Education, when it is not busy erecting hypotheses into dogmas, is simply a bare recital of fact.

Mr. Banks : I am sorry, but I am not sure that I follow you here. I thought that, according to your view, all education consisted of a deliberate casting of the minds of the young into a certain mould, in the interests of the various powers that be. If your account is correct, and do not please for one moment imagine that I agree with you in this, it is clearly impossible for education to consist at the same time in the transmission of brute fact. Fact does not cast a mind in any mould ; it may dry it up, of course, that is another thing ; but to assert that in conveying to a child the information that seven times seven is forty-nine you are striving to imbue its mind with a complexion convenient to yourself is palpably absurd.

Anthony : I am sorry not to have made myself clearer, for, believe me, you have not quite grasped

my position. Professor Cameron asked me to apply my friend's Life Force theory to various departments of human intellectual activity. In endeavouring to do so, I ventured to define a certain type of mental attitude—what I have called the academic mind—which appears to me to embody and to advocate a false view of the function of reason and the status of knowledge. This academic mind, besides typifying an erroneous attitude to the developments of the Life Force, is in itself obstructive to those developments. I then endeavoured to give illustrations of what I regarded as this erroneous attitude of the academic mind to various branches of intellectual activity, and in due course I touched on education. At this point Professor Cameron enunciated his view of the function and object of education, which was, he considered, the transmission for the benefit of the coming generation of the general body of culture and learning inherited by the race. I immediately disputed this conception which I asserted to be typical of the attitude of the academic mind, and therefore a conception peculiarly relevant to the discussion we had undertaken, and I said that I desired in particular to bring three arguments against this conception of education.

My first and second arguments consisted in pointing to the complete absence of any such body of authorized and agreed knowledge as Professor Cameron's conception of education required ; in its absence all that is fundamental and important for a man's outlook upon the world is conveyed to the young in the shape of half truths and dogmatized hypotheses. We prove the superiority of the white races to the black, deduce the right of the former to rule and exploit the latter and call it anthropology ; we inculcate the dogmas of the Christian religion as universal truths, ignore or contemptuously dismiss other religions as mythologies,

and call it scripture or theology; we make a list of great men, exaggerate their influence upon events in order the better to ignore that of economic factors, and call it history; we represent authority as law and order, disparage political experiments as anarchy and licence, and call it political theory; we cook the evidence derived from heredity in order to prove that men are naturally born unequal, ignore so far as possible the effect of environment on character in the endeavour to discredit socialism, and call the process genetics or biology. Thus we supply the place of knowledge by converting other men's conjectures into dogmas. But such impudent misrepresentations are not, it will be readily conceded, the whole of what is called education. In addition to the wholesale organization of opinion under the guise of the inculcation of truth, in addition to dogmas masquerading as truisms, postulates disguised as axioms, fairy tales as science, and plausible guesses as well established theories, in addition to issues which are presented prejudged, the causes (that of the devil, for instance) which are blackened from the outset, and the controversies of which the young are allowed to hear only one side, there is all that branch of education which is concerned simply with the communication of fact.

III. Education as the Inculcation of Fact

And my third argument against Professor Cameron is simply this: that the inculcation of brute fact is no more truly a transmission of the inherited culture and knowledge of the race than the hypostatization of half-baked theories.

The question whether there are such things in the Universe as real, independent facts—facts, that

is to say, which are static and permanent, and of which it is possible for us to have absolute knowledge, involves a consideration of logical and metaphysical problems which would carry us beyond the limits of our present discussion. Moreover, it is a question with which I do not feel competent to deal. But, if I may do so without stirring too deeply the troubled waters of metaphysical controversy, I should like to point out that the facts with regard to which we feel most certain that they are facts, are all comparatively trivial and irrelevant, as for example, the fact that seven times seven is forty-nine, or that Edinburgh is to the north of London. In proportion as our certainty increases, so does the importance of that of which we are certain decrease.

The nearer things are and the more important they are to us, the less we know about them. We know more about the constitution of beer than about that of blood, more about the reflexes of frogs than about our own souls ; we can predict the course of the stars with more certainty than we can predict the changes of the weather, and affirm the existence of our next door neighbour, whom we don't know, with more certainty than the existence of God, whom we think we do. Thus the knowledge which we most certainly have is knowledge that we could do just as well without. A fact which, as we say, we know—a mathematical fact is a good example—is an isolated, abstract sort of thing, torn forcibly from the context in which alone it has life and devitalized in the process ; it is like a skeleton waiting to be clothed with living flesh. And the living flesh that surrounds the framework of abstract fact is its context, a context which is pulsing and growing and changing. It is this living context which is what makes facts important, and it is this which can never be absolutely and certainly known.

MR. BANKS. : Why not ?

ANTHONY : Partly because it cannot be said absolutely and certainly to exist.

MR. BANKS : Again, why not ?

ANTHONY : You will find the reasons in Plato's *Republic*. Briefly they consist in pointing out that whatever belongs to the world of which our senses make us aware, is relative to and in part dependent upon the nature of our senses. Also it is continually changing. Hence it no sooner is than it is half-way on the road to becoming something else, that is, as Plato puts it, its nature is to " become " rather than " to be." Of course Plato maintained that there was in addition to the world known to the senses a real world of Forms or essences, changeless, eternal and perfect, which was the cause of the world of change and " becoming." As the ultimate goal of our knowledge this world is no doubt of supreme importance ; but upon our day to day life its effect is practically negligible. Normally we do not know it ; it is only because life has now for the first time evolved at a level at which in æsthetic and mystical experience it is dimly discerned, that its existence is beginning to be suspected. Hence at the common sense level on which we are conducting these discussions we may safely leave the question of the existence and nature of this so-called real world out of account.

(*b*) In considering historical truth a few moments ago*, I said that it consisted of two different elements. The first I described as the historian's general impression of a period or a personage ; the second, of which alone the word true can legitimately, if at all, be predicated, is just that collection of facts of which I am now speaking. Of such facts I grant you there may, I do not say must, be knowledge. But I want now to illustrate, with special reference to history, the point that true knowledge, or knowledge

* See page 45.

of fact in the sense in which I have described fact, is always trivial and unimportant : it informs you, for example, that the battle of Waterloo was fought in 1815, or that Nelson was shot in the breast and not in the leg, or that Henry VIII had roast beef and brussels sprouts for his dinner and sack to drink with his dinner on his forty-third birthday.

A knowledge of fact is composed of an accumulation of isolated and irrelevant truths of this kind. One knows the bare fact : of its import, of its significance, of all that gives it life and places it as it were in the scheme of history, one knows nothing and can know nothing, seeing that of significance and import one can have ideas only. Hence this world of significance is the world of controversy. Now that one has knowledge of facts of this isolated and trivial character I am not prepared to deny ; and it may be that this knowledge is absolute and immutable. What I do deny is that the record of this sort of fact constitutes the inherited culture of the race, in virtue of its inheritance of which the starting point of each generation in the march of progress will be ahead of that of its predecessor.

And this is realized, I understand, even by educationists, or at least by the more enlightened of them. It is, I believe, recognized that the mere giving of information is not education, and that a child's head is not a sort of receptacle to be stuffed with facts as we stuff a jar with jam. In my day of course it was different : the acquisition of mere knowledge was in itself an achievement, and the ability in an examination to give a correct description of the menu of Henry VIII's birthday dinner, or of the lineage of his fourth wife, was regarded as the highwater-mark test of the efficiency of the education which the pupil had received.

But this idea is now, I hear, discarded. While we grew up amid a ceaseless round of paradigms, syntactical exercises, dates, lists of bays and products, and genealogical tables, the modern way is, I understand, to teach children to think and not merely to know. To teach them to think? Yes, but to teach them what to think, or how to think? You would hold the former view, Professor. "To teach them what to think" is the theory of education, in terms of which the academic mind has thought, and taught, and formed, and warped and distorted the minds of the young since the beginning of time.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Yes, I must admit that I do believe that education should at any rate in part teach the young what to think! But it should not teach them all to think alike. Just as we endeavour to form a boy's character, not with the object of reducing all men to one common mould, but in order to establish for him those elementary notions of decency and good taste which he may afterwards develop in his own way in contact with the world, so there is a certain indispensable, mental equipment with which we should try to arm him for the struggle which is life. A respect for his country founded on knowledge of its history and institutions, a respect for the past based on acquaintance with its language and literature, a reverence for his own mind and body born of a study of the elementary facts of psychology and physiology, these are some of the things which education should teach. They are part of that common stock of racial knowledge to which you have so often and so contemptuously referred. You, I understand, deny that such knowledge exists: for you there are no truths that pass unchallenged, or only truths about trivial points of fact; and in passing off what you call opinion as truth you say we are cheating the young. But

if there is no definite body of knowledge to be inculcated, I fail to see on what ground you criticize education for inculcating definite knowledge. You cannot, in fact, have it both ways : you cannot first deny the existence of that knowledge we inherit from the past, and then deplore the attempt of education to transmit a knowledge that is non-existent, on the ground that it teaches what to think and not how to think.

ANTHONY : I am glad you raised that point, because it brings me to the core of the argument. You have asserted that it is the business of education to transmit the inherited culture and knowledge of the race, on the assumption that this culture and knowledge include not only what is true but also what is living and therefore valuable. In opposition to your view I am trying to make two rather different points. First, in so far as the culture and knowledge of the past include what was and, in spite of the passage of time, still remains absolutely true, that truth has no value ; secondly, in so far as they include what was once living and valuable because it was living, they include it no longer, for its value, conferred upon it by the need of the age that gave it birth, has evaporated with the passing of the need. It follows that the academic mind, in so far as it tries to fulfil your conception of education, fails and must of necessity fail of its object. It conveys information, so much is admitted : but the living truth and culture of the past it cannot convey, because they are no longer living.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Your remarks, Mr. Anthony, are eloquent but cryptic ; they sound as if they ought to be very moving, but in fact I find them merely bewildering. Will you please explain further.

ANTHONY : Bear with me a little longer and I hope to make my meaning clearer. Moreover,

there are, as I have just said, two rather different points that I am trying to establish. I have not claimed that I have yet succeeded in establishing them ; I will now try to do so.

You will remember that at the beginning of our discussion I quoted as a typical illustration of the attitude of the academic mind, its treatment of Aristotle's theory of the function of tragedy as the purgation of pity and terror. The academic mind was not, I pointed out, interested in the truth of this theory : it was concerned to indicate the views of different commentators as to Aristotle's precise meaning, the development of the theory in the writings of his followers, and the criticisms urged against it by his contemporaries and his successors.

The illustration may be taken as a fair sample of the attitude to the thought and culture of the past and to the transmission of that culture to others under the name of education that I am censuring.

Take, for example, the treatment of English literature at the Universities. It is probable that literature cannot be taught at all. Literature was written to be enjoyed, not to be learnt. You cannot manufacture good taste, nor can you take the kingdom of beauty by storm.

But what passes for the teaching of literature is analogous to what passes for the teaching of philosophy : we learn not literature, but the history of literature, which is about as irrelevant to literature itself as the knowledge of the origin of your breakfast sausage is irrelevant or even detrimental to its enjoyment.

Just as our instinctive question about a philosophy, " Is it true ? " is answered by the information that Leibuiz adopted it with modifications from Descartes, so does our natural question about literature, " Is it a great play and, if so, why ? " provoke the news that Shakespeare obtained the plot from

Holinshed's *Chronicles*, four of the characters from Lyly or was it Kyd, and the setting from Peele or was it Greene? The teaching of literature is dogged from first to last with this chatter about sources and origins: with conjectures as to whether A borrowed X from B or from C; with estimates of the possible influence of P over Q, and a careful examination of M's text with a microscope with a view to discovering possible debts to N. All this is embedded in a mass of gossip about the lives and personalities of writers. We are informed of the public appointments held by Fielding, the financial operations of Peacock, the love affairs of George Sand, as if a knowledge of the episodes in the life of a genius were essential to an appreciation of his work, or as if the genius himself were anything more than a sort of glorified fountain pen for transmitting the inspiration of the Life Force to humanity. Now nobody cares to know the make of the fountain pen with which Shaw wrote *Candida*!

And the result of this concentration by lecturers on the mechanism of literature, this unhealthy insistence by examiners that students should be able to take the machine to pieces and to demonstrate how the wheels go round, is not only to create a fictitious interest in the machinery, but to cause this fictitious interest to usurp the rightful interest in literature as such.

It is a commonplace that excess of divinity and church-going in youth poisons the Bible for us in manhood; yet the number of those for whom the plays of Shakespeare have been ruined by the geological investigations they were compelled to make at school into the strata of their texts, can scarcely be less. For too many of us have the great names of English literature come to symbolize tedium and dulness, not because of any intrinsic defect in our own taste, but because of

the improper treatment to which we were compelled to subject these writers when we were young.

Take a thing of beauty to pieces and examine its works, and you destroy the beauty. Vivisect the works of genius in the interest of sources and influences, and the genius will escape you. You must not go behind the scenes of greatness. No wise man is a valet to his hero. Thank heaven I was saved from this. I can appreciate Shakespeare and George Eliot because I was allowed to read them at my own time, in my own way and for my own purposes. Those who have not had a classical training are less fortunate. For this, indeed, is the greatest though the least recognized advantage of a classical education, that by concentrating your attention in youth upon literature of minor importance, it gives you no chance of ruining your taste for the masterpieces of great literature by attacking them before you are ready for them ; the classics, in fact, prevent premature consumption from spoiling your appetite for the best, by the device of feeding your immature stomach on the second best.

But I digress.

Mr. Banks : I am afraid you do. I fail to see the relevance of this diatribe on the classics.

Anthony : In introducing the classics I was perhaps going a little beyond my brief. But my reference to the teaching of the history of philosophy and literature was deliberate. For do you not see that these lectures on sources and influences and continuity are instances of the most striking character of that subordination of substance to form, which I began by citing as the chief characteristic of the academic mind ? The poems of Wordsworth, we are agreed, were meant to be read as a whole and enjoyed as a work of art : analyse them for the pleasure of spotting the

influence of the Graveyard school, and what you have done is to lose your pleasure in the substance because of your interest in the form.

And why does the academic mind instinctively behave like this ? Why does it display this indifference to the substance of truth and beauty, while it concentrates upon the forms which they happen to have assumed ? Because the very process of trying to capture and preserve a vital thought or a living work of art, of embalming it, as it were, to treasure as a possession for all time, kills the life that is in it ; so that for the conscientious transmitter to posterity there remains only the empty vessel that held the vital essence. The vitality that gave it value has passed elsewhere.

Value is Derived from the Life Force and is Relative

Mr. Banks : There is left, in fact, the form and nothing else.

Anthony : Exactly, you have caught my idea at last. The form is transmitted because the substance has gone. And why has the substance gone ? Because the value of a thought or a work of art, being derived from the Life Force, is relative to the immediate purpose which Life has in view, and perishes when that purpose is served. Thus, in treasuring and transmitting the thought of the past, we treasure and transmit what is no longer alive.

I am afraid I have travelled a long way round in the endeavour to present this conclusion. I have done so because it was not pre-formed in my own mind, and, when Professor Cameron asked me to apply the theory of creative evolution to the various departments of human activity, I had to grope my way as I went and, starting at haphazard

with education, to travel the path that led from it to the theory of evolution which I am assuming as the background of our discussion. But now that the journey has been accomplished and the chain of reasoning, after many stragglings and turnings, has been linked up at both ends, I wish, if you will allow me, to draw attention to two links in particular and, by putting upon them the strain of further examination, to test their strength.

The Genesis and Purpose of New Thought

(1) In the first place let us consider the initial link in this chain of connection, initial, that is, from the Life Force end. The Life Force, I say, manifests itself primarily in the inspiration of genius, in the works of great writers and in the creations of great artists, which are thrown up from time to time to act as signposts pointing the road along which the evolution of life as life is manifested in the minds of human beings lies. The value then of any work of art, which we call great, or of any thought or system of which mankind says that it is true, is relative.

It is relative in the sense that it is dependent upon the extent to which the art, system of philosophy, or ethical code does or does not advance mankind a step forward in the direction of the goal that life as a whole is seeking to achieve. When that step has been taken, the particular work in question has fulfilled the purpose for which it was created, and, having fulfilled it, is permitted to sink into oblivion.

Now the whole course of human evolution is strewn with the débris of these disused ideas. The products of past genius are like suits of clothes which humanity has discarded because it

has outgrown them. And because their beauty has lost its significance and their thought its message, life has left them behind. Mankind has learnt, or has refused to learn what there was to learn, in the ethics of Christ or in the thought of Plato, and from the point of view of the Life Force these things no longer have significance.

MR. BANKS : One moment, please : has Christ no message for the world to-day ?

ANTHONY : No ! For the world will not listen to it : it never would. Christ is an experiment that has failed. The Life Force produced Him too early, that is to say, before the world was ready for Him. And the world which rejected His teaching when it was living, now employs it to divert men's attention from the vital doctrines of the present. Greatness endures only for a space. The unresting power which ceaselessly urges forward the process of evolution throws up new men of genius, new artists, new writers and new thinkers, whose business it is to reveal to humanity a further stage of the journey that lies before it, and to direct mankind along the road which it must travel. For a time the words of these men will have value and significance, which are what men call greatness. That time will endure so long as their work has a message for mankind, which expresses the will and purpose of life at the stage of evolution which has been reached ; when that message has been delivered their day is done, and, though men still call them great, their greatness will be a convention and not a reality.

Its Reception by the Academic Mind

Now it will be obvious that anything which distracts men's attention from the emergence of

new thought, thought which contains, as it were, a further instalment of the Life Force's message, will be retarding its comprehension and acceptance by mankind and so delaying the progress of evolution. Equally obstructive will be an attitude of mind which insists on regarding the work which humanity has outgrown as still vital and significant, and diverts the attention of the young from what is new and living to what is old and lifeless, on the ground that the inherited culture of the race must be transmitted. For the inherited culture of the race is nothing but the accumulated refuse of the past, a sort of permanent second-hand clothes shop, in which are stored all the mental garments which humanity has outgrown. And it is the academic mind which, poking among this flotsam and jetsam of the past, picks out this suit or that, furbishes it up and insists on pressing it upon our notice, on the ground that works of art possess a glory which is immutable and transcendent, and are therefore as worthy of the admiration of mankind to-day as on the day which gave them birth.

(2) And it is here that I am seeking to test the second important link in my chain, by demonstrating that the character and methods which education has assumed to-day are directly derivable from a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of evolution and of its purpose.

Let me briefly summarize my reasons for asserting that education, as you conceive it, cannot be other than it is. I spoke just now of the tendency of lecturers and teachers to direct attention not to the intrinsic merits of the system under discussion, but to its relations with other systems, its origins, and its subsequent modifications.

Why this tendency? Because these great systems of the past, having by the mere progress of evolution fulfilled their mission, have lost both significance

and driving force. They are not living but dead, and any attempt to infuse life into the corpse by conjuring up interest in the ideas that once held the world is doomed to failure. We are left then with two things: with the recital of mere fact, and with the external form which the thought when living assumed.

The recital of mere fact constitutes the bulk of history; it furnishes us also with lectures of the type which informs us that Plato divided the soul into three different parts, and asserted that education should consist both of music and gymnastics.

The insistence on form is the starting point of those interminable discussions as to what A thought of B, what were the sources of A's thought, and how A was criticized by C, so that for the inquiry which was once alive, namely, how far are Aristotle's teachings true, we are asked to consider what is the relation of Aristotle's teachings to his age, to Plato or to his successors. This inquiry is beside the point. The Life Force produced Aristotle in order that he might convey its promptings to humanity, and to his contemporaries it was a matter of burning moment to ask, "What has this fellow got to say to me?" But that question is meaningless now. To the twentieth century student Aristotle has very little to say, and for that very reason his lecturer has to content himself with conveying information as to the sources from which he obtained his remarks. He has, in fact, to concentrate on the form of Aristotle, because the substance of Aristotle has fled.

The Effect upon the Teacher and the Race

But this is not the end of the story. This perverted attitude into which the teacher is driven

towards the giants of the past reacts unfavourably upon the teacher himself. If you systematically assert that what is dead and meaningless has value and significance, your self-respect will sooner or later impose upon you the belief that it *has* value and significance. Concentrate perforce upon form when substance is lacking, and form will come to you to seem more important than substance wherever it is found. Spend your days among mummies, and something of the mummy will enter into yourself. In other words, your mind will inevitably become academic from the character of the material with which it deals.

Thus the habit of concentrating on the things of the past will affect your attitude to the things of the present. You will lose your grip on life: existence will have no meaning for you, or it will have at best a second-hand meaning of the kind provided for inert minds, by the numerous associations and societies for the preservation of ancient hypotheses as valuable truths.

For these systems and theories, which you know so well and which you have erected into such tremendous importance, will stand between you and the ready reception of what is new. This knowledge of the past, this culture of the race that you seek to transmit to others, will, like a pair of coloured mental spectacles, darken your view of life, blind you to the purposes for which the Life Force created you, and distort the impulses by which it prompts you. Ideas about the world will come to you ready-made, culled from the museum of the past. The wealth of knowledge and culture which you have made your own, like an intellectual big store, a sort of Selfridge's of ideas, will provide you with a ready-made, intellectual equipment to suit your temperament and your interests. But the man whose training and education has presented him with his mental outfit

ready-made, will not find it necessary to set his mind to work to discover a meaning in life for himself.

You spoke of education at the beginning of our discussion, as enabling each generation to begin the pursuit of knowledge and the enrichment of culture where its predecessor left off. It was to build upon foundations already laid and by so doing to render progress possible. Yet if my view may claim to be more than the vapourings of a disgruntled outsider, it would seem that the effect of education is almost exactly the contrary.

By substituting a knowledge of the past for an interest in the present it leads to mental incuriosity and stagnation : by instilling an exaggerated respect for the achievements of our predecessors, it creates a prejudicial attitude to the experiments of our contemporaries ; by providing us with a ready-made attitude to the world, it saves us the trouble of defining one for ourselves. Hence the academic mind is incurious, unprogressive and reactionary ; every new branch of study, every new science, can only establish itself in the teeth of its opposition. Look at the past struggle of psychology, look at the present struggle of investigators into the unconscious to obtain any foothold at our seats of learning.

Why experiment, why trouble to open up new avenues of study ? Is it not all to be found in Plato ?

Such is the attitude of the academic mind to those continual promptings of the Life Force which impel men to question, to criticize and finally to reject, the standards and knowledge of the past, that they may themselves point the way to the vision of the future ; such is the attitude of hostility to what is new and the undue veneration for what is old, which make of this type of mind the chief obstruction to the purposes of Life, as they are expressed in the sphere of intellect.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: And does this conclude your application of the Life Force theory to the principles of education?

ANTHONY: It does. I have indicated in what way the leading ideas of education, as education is conceived to-day, are antagonistic to the purposes of evolution, and how the academic mind, which is for me the epitome of the attitude of the educational world, has set its face definitely in the wrong direction!

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Yes, you have indicted education as it is, and demonstrated in what way it falls short of some ideal to which your metaphysical views direct you. You have endeavoured to throw doubt upon my conception of the function of education, and I have to thank you for an interesting exposition by which I have nevertheless been not altogether convinced. In short, you have told me what education ought not to be. You have not even hinted at what it should be.

Education as a Process of Self-revelation

ANTHONY: That, of course, is another story. And it is one on which I have surprisingly little to say.

You will remember that I summarized the opposition between your view of education and mine by the remark that you held that education should teach what to think, while I, on the contrary, believed that it should teach how to think. But there are no rules for teaching how to think: such teaching must, in fact, be different in each case. A child's mind is an experiment, an experiment on the part of the Life Force, and it should be allowed to claim the right of every experiment, the right of developing on its own lines.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: But you must teach it something; if you do not, each generation of children will start where its predecessors started, and the civilized child will have no advantage over the savage. Why perpetuate the repetition of the errors of the past, when a little instruction will enable the child to avoid them? Surely a child should reap the benefits won by the experience of its ancestors.

ANTHONY: But has it not those benefits already, Professor Cameron, even without the advantages of an academic education? Does it not, in fact, possess the benefits not only of the lives of the past but of its own past lives? You must bear in mind what the assumptions of the theory of purposive evolution, which we are taking as our metaphysical hypothesis, involve. We know that the human embryo recapitulates in the physical changes through which it passes the anatomical history of the species and of the species that preceded it. First a single cell, then a cluster of cells, it becomes a kind of worm, then a potential fish with the rudiments of gills which it still bears; presently it turns into a vertebrate mammal; it is an embryo monkey, and only at the end of its career, and after telescoping into a few months a development which took millions of years to achieve, does it assume the form of a human body.

Now this recapitulation of ancestral history is not confined, on the hypothesis we have agreed to assume, to physiological changes. The drama of evolution is re-enacted in the growth of our minds as in that of our bodies. Whether the embryo feels first like a fish and then like a monkey we do not know, but that the human infant feels and behaves like a primitive savage the researches of modern psychologists have made sufficiently clear. Psychologically as well as physiologically we telescope into a few months the developments of our

infinitely prolonged past, appearing in the world with innate faculties which it has taken our ancestors centuries to acquire. For in asserting that life is continuous from generation to generation, I am asserting also that something of each generation survives into the next. The individual, I hold, reverts at death to the main stream of life, carrying with him the endowments of skill and knowledge which he has acquired in the course of his individual life. Thus life, continually enriched with the acquisitions that each individual unit brings to it, manifests itself in each successive generation at a higher level than in the last. In other words, the acquisitions of one individual life become the innate faculties of the next. Thus the life stream within us, remaining one and the same through countless individual manifestations, advances in each to a higher stage of development, endowing each successive expression of itself with more and more well-developed faculties from the constantly enriched store of acquisitions won for it by the individuals in whom it has manifested itself in the past. Thus evolutionary progress consists in a constant transference of conscious skill and knowledge into unconscious natural endowment. Originally, we may suppose, the species had consciously to attend to the performance of such basic operations as circulating its blood or growing its hair or nails, which we now do instinctively. The transference to the unconscious or instinctive part of ourselves of processes which once required conscious effort and attention is an evolutionary gain, since it sets free our energy and attention for the acquisition of new powers. For example, we learn by effort and practice to ride the bicycle and to do the multiplication table. If we go on learning these things for a sufficient number of generations, we shall one day come to know how to do them instinctively, with the result

that children will be born to our remote descendants with an instinctive capacity for balancing themselves on two wheels and an innate knowledge that seven times seven make forty-nine. We thus have a formula for progress in evolution according to which each generation knows and does instinctively more of the things which previous generations had to expend attention and energy in knowing and doing. Thus for each generation there is available a greater fund of energy and attention for the acquisition of new vital powers and faculties, which in their turn will form part of the inherited equipment of future generations. Vital progress thus consists in the transference of the conscious acquisitions of one generation to the unconscious natural endowment of the next, so that what is first acquired as a faculty ends in being inherited as an instinct. In this sense, then, acquired characteristics can be transmitted, the machinery of transference being that faculty of unconscious memory which we call instinct.

Now bearing in mind that this theory is by no means unsupported by evidence, and assuming for the moment that it is correct in what it asserts, consider whether it will not profoundly affect our view of education.

Mr. Banks : How does it do that, pray ?

Anthony : Because it reduces education very largely to a question of self-revelation. If all the acquisitions of the past lives of your ancestors are stored in your unconscious, it is enough that your conscious should become aware of them. Professor Cameron, anxious that each generation should not lose the advantage over its predecessors which a knowledge of the accumulated learning of the past would bestow, regards education primarily as a means for conveying that knowledge. But, if my theory is right, that knowledge is, in a sense

already stored within us. So far from starting with a clean slate, we possess in our unconscious a tablet covered with the writings that our past experiences have inscribed ; and if we would put ourselves in possession of the knowledge of the past, we should read it not in books but within ourselves.

The Greeks, with their usual uncanny prescience of future developments, hinted at this conclusion. They insisted that man's chief object in life was "to know himself," and "γνῶθι σεαυτὸν" might perhaps be accounted the watchword of education, as the theory of creative evolution requires us to conceive it.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Education is, then, for you simply a branch of psychology. We have to learn to know ourselves, or rather our own unconscious selves, and no other key is necessary to unlock for us all the doors of the treasure house of the past.

ANTHONY : I do not say that no other key is necessary. I have merely tried to show that, even were that education, which is conceived as the transmission of inherited knowledge and culture, to be entirely eliminated, it would nevertheless be unnecessary for each generation to traverse again the steps taken by its predecessors.

But it does not necessarily follow that we should disdain such assistance as education may proffer. Reading, writing, arithmetic and certain elementary facts, are the necessary instruments for the acquisition of new knowledge, and should be insisted upon. The purpose of literature, for instance, is to reveal us to ourselves ; but we must learn to read before we can enjoy literature.

For the rest, let us present ideas as hypotheses and not as dogmas ; history as interpretation and not as fact ; political science and economics as political propaganda and not as ascertained truth ;

religion as mysticism and not as sense; and let us suffer the mind of the young man to find its way among the intellectual tangle that humanity pretentiously calls its knowledge as best it may.

DIALOGUE

II

LIFE AND ART

Introduction

PROFESSOR CAMERON : I find you on the whole an entertaining talker, Mr. Anthony, and although your application of your friend's theories is at times a little crude, it makes up, I find, in verve what it lacks in perspective. I am hoping to-day that you will continue to apply.

ANTHONY : I am at your service, but I am not a phonograph to play to order. The subject you propose may not interest me, or it may be outside my compass, or again I may not be in a mood for talk. What would you have me discuss, or apply as you call it ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : The subject is your own, for it is the same subject as that which we discussed last time. You then sought to demonstrate the somewhat peculiar view of education which the metaphysic of creative evolution apparently requires. I now want you to apply that same metaphysic to literature and to art. Does not the subject interest you ?

ANTHONY : It does, but I may not be in the mood ; words may be wanting.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Our previous conversation leads me to regard such a contingency as unlikely. Most of us have to whistle for the breath of utterance ; but you, I should say, must be more concerned to get out of the draught.

ANTHONY: I thank you for the compliment. Where shall we begin?

PROFESSOR CAMERON: You will remember that we began to discuss yesterday the nature of knowledge and learning. I held that it was permanent and changeless; you sought to show that the knowledge of each age was relative to the purposes of that age, valuable, that is, only for a time. In the course of a few remarks in which I stated my view, I suggested that your hypothesis appeared to involve the belief that the value of Shakespeare's work diminished as our distance from Shakespeare increased. I inquired whether you really took this view; but though you did indeed affirm it as regards our knowledge of ideas, you avoided giving a definite answer with regard to our appreciation of the products of the imagination. Do you then hold that art and beauty, that music, poetry and the drama are also relative and ephemeral, and that their value passes as their message, if message they have, wins home? If this is the case, art is reduced to the level of journalism: Christ, who taught us much, is an artist instead of a preacher, while Jane Austen, who taught us nothing, is not an artist at all. Is this really your view? If it is, how do you propose to support so outrageous an attitude; if it is not, the theory of the Life Force must be held to fail to give a consistent account of the phenomena of art and literature.

ANTHONY: That is an awkward dilemma you propound: either the value of Shakespeare diminishes as time proceeds, or, you say, my theory fails to account for Shakespeare. Well, if I must choose, I must confess I choose the former alternative; but I agree that the assertion of the progressive decline of Shakespeare's greatness is a little startling. It wants support. And so I think I had better set to work and explain the theory of art, which

seems to me to follow from the Life Force metaphysic, without more ado.

And to-day I shall propose to follow a somewhat different method from that adopted in our previous rather wandering discussion. You will remember that my own theory of education emerged late ; I felt my way to it, as it were, through many digressions, and I described at length the prevalent contrasting view, the view of the academic mind, to throw my own into relief. In the course of the digressions I touched frequently upon the nature of genius, including literary greatness, as I conceived it, and you will already be familiar with my general point of view. I can therefore begin to-day with an immediate statement of my own conception of the purpose and function of the artist, and proceed to amplify and defend it later in the light of such criticisms as you may wish to bring. Needless to say my view is once again in opposition to that of the academic mind ; but as regards the latter, even if you do not chance to state it yourself, I have no doubt that I shall have occasion to enlarge on the wrong attitude to art and literature in order the more clearly to bring out my own.

Does the method I propose recommend itself to you ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : By all means ! State your theory, and I shall no doubt find cause for disagreement. But my views are not startling, and, as it is difficult to make orthodoxy interesting, I should prefer correcting you to being correct myself.

ANTHONY : I have one more preliminary observation to make. I have referred somewhat indiscriminately to art and to literature, to the artist and to the writer, and in the last resort I believe that what I shall say of the one will hold true of the other. If all great men are primarily teachers, it matters little whether they convey their message

through words, music or paint. But I have little knowledge of the arts, and the examples I take will be drawn primarily from the realm of literature, just as my theory will appear more readily applicable to literature.*

But please understand that when I speak indiscriminately of the artist, the thinker, the writer, the prophet, the man of genius, and so forth, I do mean one and the same person: a person thrown up by the Life Force in order to reveal to man the purpose of Life, and to increase man's consciousness of himself.

A Vitalist Theory of Art

This remark brings me at once to the statement of my theory.

The artist, as I say, is created by the Life Force for a special purpose. This purpose is to bring new ideas into the world. These ideas have a threefold function, each function being part of the same purpose. In the first place they indicate to mankind the direction in which the Life Force desires evolution to proceed. In the second they enrich and develop the intellect which grasps them. On this point I may say at once that the object of developing man's intellect is to improve his efficiency as an instrument, by making him quicker to grasp and readier to achieve those purposes of Life which, at his present stage of evolution, he so often thwarts. In the third place they increase man's consciousness of himself by revealing to him his own nature. Life at the beginning of the evolutionary process is, I suggest, to be regarded as an unconscious, instinctive urge. The process of

* In fact it is not, I now hold, applicable at all to music or painting. (Author).

evolution may be conceived as a continual emergence of life at new and higher levels of consciousness, and its goal life's achievement of a complete and universal consciousness. Hence whatever increases or refines man's consciousness is definitely assisting the process of evolution.

The artist, then, is in essence a purveyor of ideas. The germ of these ideas is communicated to his unconscious by the Life Force in the form of what is called inspiration. The artist is unaware of the source of this inspiration because he does not know what is taking place in his unconscious ; what he is aware of are certain ideas, accompanied by an urge to expression, which appear in his consciousness. To these ideas he immediately seeks to give concrete form in the medium which he finds most suitable. Throughout this process the artist is little more than an instrument. He is in the grip of something greater than himself, whose will he must perforce carry out whether he likes it or not ; he knows neither what he will create, nor why he creates it. He is impelled by a push from behind, not drawn by the pull of some consciously conceived object or ideal in front. He is, in fact, a vehicle used by life to give conscious expression to its instinctive purpose.

Having hazarded the principle that art is essentially didactic and propagandist, I have now to account for the phenomenon which is known as beauty. I want so far as I can to avoid a metaphysical discourse on æsthetics. Whether beauty is an objective factor or principle in the universe, subsisting independently of the works of art and natural phenomena which we recognize as beautiful, I do not know. My inclination, indeed, is to so regard it, and to place it with Plato, in a real world of value with truth and goodness somewhere in attendance. Of this world, or rather of its likeness as imaged in the material setting of the world

of becoming, we have vague and fleeting intimations in æsthetic and mystical experience, and it is an intriguing speculation to regard the object of life as the achievement of a complete and untrammelled consciousness of that world, which at present it imperfectly apprehends in the æsthetic and mystical experience of its most advanced representatives.

But the discussion of the metaphysical status of beauty is not the one which I wish to pursue, if only because it raises the question of the nature of metaphysical truth, and, though I am prepared to admit that it may be true in some abstract metaphysical sense that beauty is an independent objective factor in the universe, this admission has no bearing upon our present discussion, which is the function of art in furthering the process of evolution.

There is, as you know, an age-long controversy between those who believe in art for art's sake and those who do not. The former hold that the beauty of a work of art is its sole *raison d'être*, the only factor of which an appraisement of the value of that work should take account. As for meaning, it is only valuable as being in some way an integral part of the beauty of the whole. The latter believe that other factors besides beauty contribute value ; but I am not clear that they would all agree with me in holding that the real alternative to art for art's sake is art for propaganda's sake. The beauty of a work of art is, in fact, for me nothing more than a contrivance of the Life Force for securing that its ideas shall win acceptance. It is the sugar on the pill ; suck the sugar, and you swallow the pill : yield to the glamour of poetry, and your mind will absorb the thought behind it. Taste, to continue the metaphor, is the appreciation of the sugar by the person swallowing the pill.

The element of beauty will, of course, vary with the nature of the work that it enshrines. Great works may be composed of the ingredients of beauty and propaganda in very different degrees. At one end of the scale you have the purely didactic teacher, preacher or reformer, who serves out his message hot and strong and disdains the adventitious aids to popular favour which an admixture of beauty would confer. Such artists there are, but they are few : Socrates dispensed with beauty, and so I think does Einstein ; but as a rule the innovator, whether in thought or morals, clothes his teaching, as did Christ in His parables, with poetry, with the play of the imagination, or it may be of wit, and the beauty of form. At the other end of the scale you have the lyric poet, the pictorial artist and the musician, whose message is so difficult to disentangle from the sensuous beauty of the vehicle that conveys it, as to induce many critics to embrace the erroneous view that beauty is an end in itself, and that it is the business of art to create beauty. I am dogmatically stigmatizing this view as erroneous because I am at the moment stating my own theory, without seeking to defend it or to criticize alternative views. Speaking generally, however, I should say that the works of art in which the didactic element is apparently small and the element of beauty, whether of form or of sound, is large, fulfil the second and third of the functions to which I referred just now, instead of subserving the purposes of the Life Force by the more direct method of introducing to the world new ideas. That is to say, the arts of painting, of music and of lyrical poetry deepen and enrich human consciousness by sharpening and refining the senses, and, by means of the feelings which they arouse, reveal to us a deeper knowledge of our natures. Moreover, they quicken our consciousness and increase our sensitiveness to the

world around us, making us perceive new beauty and interest, and realize more scope for our sympathy and passion than we realized before. Even in these cases, however, beauty is to be regarded not so much as the end to which the work of art aspires, or as the criterion by which it should be judged, as the method of its appeal. It is because men are attracted and ensnared by the beauty of art that they are willing to face the pain and disillusionment which their heightened sensitiveness to life involves. The cultivated man is revolted by vulgarity and exasperated by stupidity. His superior intellect enables him to penetrate the shams and conventions which for ordinary people make life tolerable, while, as he stands outside the herd, he is deprived of the sense of spiritual rest, of comfort and security which the herd guarantees its members. As a rule the artist is no happier than other men of intellect. Loneliness and disillusion is, in fact, the price men pay for the refinement of the spirit, so that in the historic antithesis between being Socrates unhappy and a pig happy, we might justifiably replace Socrates by Leonardo or Beethoven. What I have said about beauty I believe also to be true of literary merit, whether it be interpreted as charm of style, appropriateness of diction, liveliness of presentation, or whatever else in the way of the literary graces you care to name. My view then, in short, is that the business of the artist is to be a teacher, his function to give conscious expression to the instinctive promptings of the Life Force.

It follows that all first-rate artists will be found to have brought into the world new thoughts and ideas which, in the long run, have profoundly changed the convictions and conduct of men. By the very fact of creating they stimulate new thoughts and feelings, suggest new points of view and change old ones. In a word they assist the progress

of the race by adding to its store of truth, wisdom and beauty.

Euripides foreshadowed a new morality: he treated women as human beings; Ibsen a changed attitude to domestic relationships; Shaw to marriage. Hardy has profoundly modified our conception of God, and Blake, if we would but read him, would produce an equivalent modification in our conception of virtue. Dickens taught the importance of kindness, Bunyan of humility, Samuel Butler of irreverence: so the list might be indefinitely continued.

While the first-rate artist brings new ideas into the world, or emphasizes new aspects of old ones, it is the characteristic of the second-rate artist to reflect the ideas of others, incidentally polishing them in the process of presenting them in a new dress. Shakespeare, I am afraid, on my conception, is for the most part only a good second-rater: he dealt in the stock of ideas current in his day and added to them not at all; and so, if I may end my statement with a reply to one of your questions, I should answer that the question of whether Shakespeare's Life Force value diminishes by the mere lapse of time does not arise, since Shakespeare's Life Force value was always pretty much of a negligible quantity.

Professor Cameron: You certainly possess the audacity of your logic; but see into what absurd heresies it leads you. I pay you the compliment of assuming that your estimate of Shakespeare is not merely an expression of that fashionable attitude of condescension to the past and to the greatest figure of the past which Shaw, I think, initiated. I pay you the compliment, I say, of believing that you make this assertion perforce, because you find that it follows logically from your theory. And I think that it does: with your logic I have no quarrel; but what a commentary on the theory!

And if your premises lead you to such a demonstrably absurd conclusion, does it not suggest the reflection that there may be something wrong with the premises ?

ANTHONY : Do you really think the conclusion so absurd ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Indeed I do. Shakespeare was one of the greatest geniuses of all times.

ANTHONY : And are you sure that your strictures spring from a genuine conviction of my absurdity, and not from a feeling of shock at my literary blasphemy ! Please have the courage to avow it, if it is the latter feeling : I shall not mind. To feel shocked is quite a harmless form of self-indulgence.

The Academic View of Art

PROFESSOR CAMERON : My feelings of complete disagreement might perhaps be partly analyzed into what you call shock, were it not for the fact that they have been more or less actively aroused by the whole tenor of your remarks. You will not be surprised, I think, to hear that in my opinion you fundamentally misconceive the whole purpose and effect of artistic and literary production.

When we talk of the value or truth of a work of art we are using the words value and truth in a very special sense, a sense which is distinct from that in which these words are used in, let us say, science or mathematics. This distinction I think you overlook. Let me try to explain in a little more detail what I mean.

You are, of course, aware of the well-worn difficulty which centres round the question of whether the value of art is objective or subjective : Has the Round Madonna in the National Gallery objective value in its own right, or does its value

arise from the circumstance of its being appreciated? Would the picture, in fact, be beautiful if there were no minds to appreciate its beauty? Would Bach's Preludes and Fugues have value if there were none to hear them? These are old questions and there are many answers to them. We may embrace the purely objective view and assert roundly that the intrinsic qualities of a work of art remain unaffected by the presence or absence of human appreciation, or we may hold with Tolstoy that the value of a work of art depends entirely upon its capacity for rousing emotion in those to whom it is presented. Between the extreme objective and the extreme subjective view there are a number of intermediate theories. Whatever view we take of the matter, however, we must, I think, admit that works of art are in fact judged in accordance with certain standards, and that whether these standards have objective validity or whether they are themselves the product of human intelligence, we all recognize that they are final, at any rate for human judgment. That such standards exist and that they have this kind of finality we may agree, although we may differ as to their exact character and application. We do broadly recognize differences in value, however much we may dispute about the merits of a particular picture or poem, and it is in virtue of this recognition that we unhesitatingly proclaim Hardy the superior of Edgar Wallace and Mozart of Mendelssohn, although we cannot perhaps define exactly what we mean by the word superior when we use it.

All I am trying to establish at the moment, you will understand, is that the conception of value or quality as applied to works of art does exist for us, although we may differ as to the precise meaning of the conception. I propose, if you will allow me to denominate this particular kind of

value which is recognized as belonging to works of art as artistic truth.

Now although, as I say, we may not know what artistic truth means, there are two things which we may unhesitatingly affirm with regard to it.

In the first place it possesses the characteristic of permanence. By this characteristic it is chiefly distinguished from other kinds of truth, such as scientific truth. With regard to scientific truth it may be, as you say, that it is relative and changing. Personally I should say that it is provisional and partial, provisional in the sense that any scientific truth may be overturned or modified by subsequent discovery, partial in the sense that, since it is not the whole truth about the Universe, it must always remain liable to modification and amplification by other aspects of truth not yet discovered ; on my view, therefore, though I am not pressing this at the moment, scientific truth is not wholly true just because it is not wholly complete in what it asserts. It will at any rate be admitted, that the scientific truth of the past is modified and superseded by the discoveries of the present : pre-Darwinian biology was rendered practically worthless by the work of the later nineteenth century, and the science of medicine before Harvey was rendered nugatory by his discovery of the circulation of the blood. Even in the comparatively static realm of mathematical physics the truth of Newton has, I understand, been largely put out of court by the truth of Einstein.

Now the quality of artistic truth is radically different. We feel that the value of a work of art is permanent, in the sense that it cannot be destroyed, superseded or amplified by anything that comes after it. The form, the mode of expression may belong to the past, but the substance of the artistic truth belongs to a world which is

independent of time and space. The value of Sophocles does not diminish because Shakespeare wrote after him : the statues of Pheidias are not superseded because the sculpture of Rodin is also beautiful. Thus the creations of great art may be multiplied indefinitely without any one of them destroying or diminishing by competition the value of any other.

Take, for instance, the case of the pictorial artist. For the excellence of a picture it is immaterial whether its object ever existed, or whether the object, if it does exist, has been correctly reproduced : and the value of the picture, being independent of the world of fact, is not affected by the changes that take place in that world. Or consider the novelist. It is the business of the novelist neither to copy the world as he sees it, nor yet to spin an unreal world from his imagination ; but, starting from the world of fact, to destroy that world by selection, emphasis, omission and rearrangement, and to recreate from it an ideal world, which, a unity in itself, is a closer embodiment of the essential reality of life than any world of actually living people can ever hope to be. This ideal world of the novelist is also independent of and unaffected by changes in the world of so-called fact, which we know through the medium of our senses. Artistic truth, then, is permanent and changeless.

In the second place artistic truth possesses the character of uniqueness. Its value is qualitative and not quantitative. By this I mean, among other things, that every work of art which has artistic truth is incomparable and unanalyzable. And herein consists a further distinction between artistic truth and other kinds of truth.

In the case of mathematical and scientific truth we can compare the value of different theories or hypotheses, just because that value can be tested

and expressed quantitatively. Thus when the mathematician eliminates counting as an adequate basis for number, and substitutes for it the notion of classes of similar collections arranged serially, he has made a definite advance in quantitative truth. He has, in fact, attained to a more completely general conception of truth, which includes the former general truth as one special aspect of itself. Thus the subject matter with which mathematics and science deal is quantitative and not qualitative. The neutral particulars which are at the basis of modern physics, the integers with which the arithmetician counts, the symbols which the algebraist employs are all qualitatively the same : their differences are differences of order and arrangement : they belong to the world of more or less. The result is that, just as you can compare and measure one mathematical formula against another, so you can arrange serially for the purposes of comparison and measurement the objects with which they deal.

With artistic truth this is not so : and it is not so, just because artistic truth is concerned with differences of quality and not of quantity. You know that Sophocles is great and that Shakespeare is great, but you cannot measure them one against another to discover which is the greater. The charm of Mozart defies analysis, so does the majesty of Beethoven ; you cannot attempt to resolve the one into the other, to find a common factor between them, or to specify which embodies the greater quantity of artistic truth.

Now these two characteristics of permanence and uniqueness which distinguish the world of art and literature, constitute an element which, in the brief sketch you gave of your theory you appeared to me entirely to neglect. This is the more curious, since almost all theories of art with which I am acquainted recognize that it is a fact

to be taken into account, in whatever way they may attempt to explain it.

The explanation which is best known is, of course, that which Plato provides in his theory of Forms. He is endeavouring in this theory to account for that sense of being in touch with a permanent and unchanging reality, with something stable and perfect behind and beyond the kaleidoscope of fleeting and contradictory appearances known to us through our senses, with which we are all familiar in the presence of great art. He held, as you know, that, in some unexplained way, some essence from the world of immutable reality took shape and embodied itself in the works of great artists, and was at once the cause and the substance of the beauty of their work. In so far as any work could claim to be great, its claim must stand or fall according to the presence or absence in it of this hint of the real world that is behind and beyond. And since the greatness of any work of art is contingent upon this showing forth in it of that which is real and immutable, that greatness, such as it is, must itself partake of the changeless nature of that to which it owes its being. Artistic value is permanent then because, where it is present, reality itself is glimpsed : and reality, as opposed to the fleeting appearances which imperfectly shadow it forth, is eternally one and eternally constant. Artistic value is unique because reality is unique, and the essence of the real, which is the source of greatness, cannot be analyzed into anything other than itself. Since, moreover, reality cannot be more real than itself, we cannot say of any one work of art that is really great, that its value is more than that of another.

That there may be an element of truth in this theory you seem disposed to admit ; only, however, to dismiss it cavalierly as abstract metaphysical truth—I don't understand the significance of the

word abstract in this connection, by the way; surely, if it is true, it is true, and that is the end of the matter—which can have no bearing upon the question of the nature and the function of the beauty of concrete works of art. But this alleged distinction between metaphysical beauty and the beauty we meet with in the world around us seems to me untenable. If a metaphysical truth does not apply, it is not true. But it is not the case that the Platonic view of beauty as permanent, objective, changeless and independent both of mind and works of art, does not apply. For Plato's hypothesis does surprisingly square with the facts. It takes account of and explains not only the quality of uniqueness which we recognize as belonging to works of art that evoke æsthetic appreciation, but also the quality of uniqueness that belongs to our feeling for them. For consider what are the main characteristics of æsthetic emotion. There is, I think, in our apprehension of great works of art a certain serenity and quiescence, an emancipation from self that produces for the moment a feeling of selflessness in the observer that is akin to the nature of the beauty before him. For the moment, and for so long as the vision lasts, he is withdrawn from the stream of need and want, of striving and desiring that spring from the changing, restless surge of Life within him. His thoughts and feelings are lifted up out of the little festering pit of vanity and strife and desire that is himself, and while the contemplation persists, become merged in the all-pervasive and changeless reality which is contemplated. To glimpse the real is to become merged therein. That the vision does not last, that it fades as soon as we regain the consciousness of self, is but one more proof, if proof were wanted, that, as Plato puts it, we are but shadows in a world of shadows, whose access to the world of reality lies through beauty in art and thought in philosophy.

It is not necessary that we should accept in its entirety this view of Plato's, which is, as it were the loom from which I have woven the thread of my remarks ; it has its own difficulties, as you are, no doubt, aware : but nevertheless it seems to me necessary to adopt a view which, like his, makes provision for this quality of permanence in beauty, and of self-forgetfulness in the contemplation of beauty.

These, then, are the points which I desire to establish in opposition to your view. First, that the value of a work of art is permanent, in the sense that it is unaffected by subsequent occurrences ; secondly, that a work of art is unique in the sense that it cannot be compared quantitatively with other works ; thirdly, that it derives these qualities from its partial embodiment of the real as opposed to the illusory appearances which the real presents to the senses ; and fourthly, that for this reason the æsthetic appreciation of beauty possesses a quality of static tranquillity, and a capacity for lifting the individual out of the circle of selfish ideas and desires that normally bound his horizon, into communion with—and in moments of ecstasy into participation in—the fundamental reality that underlies the facts upon which our minds feed and the stimuli that provoke our sensations.

These considerations seem to me obvious. They are as old as Plato, and as new as Schopenhauer : a circumstance which, to my mind, makes it the more surprising that a thinker, like yourself, whose general view bears so close an affinity to that of Schopenhauer, should so entirely have failed to provide for them.

ANTHONY : I am grateful to you, Professor Cameron, for your exposition. You have given what I consider to be a very adequate statement of the view of the academic mind. I believe this view to be in theory incorrect and in practice harmful ;

yet the expression you have given to it is both noble and elevated. And it is, I think, in the spiritual distinction of this view and in its ability to satisfy a lofty hope that there is to be found the main source of its appeal. It satisfies the desire for unity, and the desire for permanence ; it points forward to a changeless world of reality, and it postulates of this reality that it shall be perfect. More important still it concentrates upon the fact of beauty, a fact which has always seemed of immense significance to the finest human minds, and accounts for that significance by the suggestion that in the contemplation of beauty we obtain a glimpse of reality itself : thus beauty is, as it were, the window through which we may look upon the perfection of the real. These considerations may serve to explain the hold which this theory has obtained upon the imaginations of men. As embraced by certain minds it has passed into mysticism, and men have sought to identify with spirit the changeless Forms which Plato held to underlie the world of seeming, or to merge their multiplicity into some unity yet more profound which they have dared to call God.

Yes, I grant you the nobility of your view ; I fully recognize the importance of the considerations tending to make us hope that it is true. So important are they, that, for those who are disposed to mistake their hopes for judgments of probability, they are doubtless convincing. But for others the very attractiveness of the hypothesis is a warning : we are suspicious of a view to which our wishes so strongly predispose us : we are anxious not to mistake the promptings of our heart for the compelling force of evidence.

And when we emancipate our minds from the distorting influence of our desires, we find that this hypothesis evinces a serious inability to square with the facts. We find, too, that in practice it is

responsible for much that is bad in art, and affords a cover for that subordination of substance to form to which I have already referred in speaking of education.

How the Academic View is Antagonistic to Evolution

If you will allow me, then, I propose in the first place to describe those manifestations of the theory you have described which appear to me to be harmful, and, in the second place, to enlarge upon those aspects of my own conception which, while demonstrating its capacity to explain the significance of what is greatest in art, at the same time seem to me to exhibit its superior ability to square with the facts.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : But I am not clear that the view I have endeavoured to set forth lends itself to any special theory of art. I was attempting rather to assert the significance of beauty and to indicate its relation to reality, than to establish a criterion for the determination of what constitutes a good book or a good picture.

ANTHONY : I quite understand. But I think that philosophy has considerable influence on practice, and I believe that the implications of your view underlie much that is second-rate in artistic production and wrong-headed in artistic criticism. I want, then, in the first place to describe those tendencies in art which appear to me to spring from a general theory of æsthetics not dissimilar from your own : the tendencies in question being to my mind bad, bad, you understand, in the sense that they are obstructive to the purposes of the Life Force.

It will of course be obvious, that assuming my hypothesis with regard to the character of the Life

Force to be correct, the attitude to works of art which you have adopted as your own must of necessity be harmful. When I stigmatized it just now as the attitude of the academic mind, you signified disagreement. But you must, I think, admit that it has many features in common with what I characterized as this attitude in its relation to education. In education the academic mind preserved the outworn dogmas and hypotheses of the past, and pressed them upon the young as the living truth of the present, on the assumption that thought which once had value must always retain that value. Your attitude to works of art is not dissimilar. Their value, you say, is permanent, their significance changeless, for the reason that the value and significance of works of art are not affected by what may succeed them. Very well then, it follows that they are as worthy of the attention and admiration of mankind to-day as they were on the day which gave them birth ; and the academic world is right to go into ecstasies of admiration over Sophocles, to hold up his perfection of form as a model to aspiring youth, and to measure the inferiority of Ibsen or Shaw by their failure to observe the standards of unity and good taste that Sophocles is supposed to have set.

Now if the value of Sophocles is really changeless, and is changeless because his work partakes of the nature of the real, all this is as it should be. But if Sophocles was a propagandist who wrote for the Athens of his day, and whose perfection of style and feeling for dramatic unity and effect were the gifts bestowed on him by the Life Force to enable him to obtain a hearing for its message, then, once that message has been delivered, the purpose of Sophocles is fulfilled. It follows that since the Athens of Sophocles is past, the modern world requires a new Sophocles to communicate

to it a fresh instalment of the Life Force's message. But what if the new Sophocles finds that the old one has staked out a permanent claim on the public ear, and that, while he continues to squat there, his own message must go unheard? Will not an attitude of mind which insists on retaining, in the position of eminence which he once so usefully occupied, a writer whose message is dead, whose thought is superseded, and whose vitality is spent, will not such an attitude be obstructive to the purposes of the Force? Does it not compel the new men, whom the Force has thrown up to voice its promptings, to fight their way to an audience in the teeth of vested interests in the public ear, instead of finding a community receptive to that new message, for the purpose of delivering which they were created? If then we assume my hypothesis, and bear in mind the indictment of an analogous theory of education which follows from my hypothesis, the view of art which you have outlined will be clearly seen to be antagonistic to the progress of evolution. It will attribute permanent value to what is old and so distract men's attention from the emergence of what is new; it will use the lumber of the past to stifle and overlay the inspiration of the present. You will admit that this result follows, if my hypothesis is correct?

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Certainly, if your hypothesis is correct, which I do not admit.

ANTHONY: I will ask you to waive that point for the moment, and to bear with me while I briefly run through certain tendencies in art and literature, which appear to me to spring from the view you have described. If I can show these tendencies to be harmful, the demonstration may perhaps not be without effect in weakening the authority of this view.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: Pray proceed.

Its Practical Manifestations : (1) *The Demand for Unity*

ANTHONY : You say, in the first place, that it is the business of art, and particularly of literary art, to destroy the seeming reality of the world of appearances, and to recreate from it a world in which the nature of the real shall be more truly embodied. To do this it must in the first place strip away the irrelevances of actual life and present the play of motive and character, the influence upon character of heredity or of environment, the workings let us say of overweening pride and of the nemesis that waits upon it, whatever in short it chooses as its subject-matter, in an artificial simplicity which will throw them into high relief. In life these elements can scarcely be disentangled from the complex skein of other phenomena with which they are interwoven : in art, which aims at unity, they must be presented as single threads that their ramifications may be discerned. In this way art will achieve a unity of presentment, and since it is, you say, the nature of the real to be a unity, the greater the unity the nearer to reality. This, then, is the first tendency I wish to consider ; the tendency to regard a great work of art as in some very important sense a unity.

Now life, of course, is not a unity. It is a bundle of incoherent motives and desires : it contains no pure thoughts, no pure instincts and no pure actions. Everything we think is shot through with half-apprehended thoughts of something else, everything we do is achieved by the suppression of something that fights against our doing it. There are, for instance, no truly brave men : some men are more afraid of some things than of others, that is all. Thus if I am more afraid of the stings of my conscience, the reputation of

cowardice and the contempt of my fellow men than of the bullets of the enemy, I go over the top and am called brave : if, on the other hand, the bullets of the enemy inspire the greater fear, I skulk in the trench and am called a coward. Men combine to encourage the former type of cowardice and applaud it by calling it bravery, because its habitual practice is of advantage to them : essentially it is no braver than its contrary.

Similarly there are no truly virtuous men. It is our nature to obey our instincts and our impulses : some of us possess impulses whose expression is of benefit to society ; others possess, on the whole, the contrary impulses. The habit of acting in accordance with the first class of impulses is naturally approved by society and is called virtue. Vice, on the other hand, is the name given to the habit of acting in accordance with impulses whose expression is not approved. All men possess both kinds of impulses and are thus virtuous and vicious in turn.

I need not multiply instances. All human qualities are susceptible of similar analysis : in life all men are all things.

Now if art is to achieve the ideal of unity at which you aim, it must to a large extent turn its back upon this variegated hotch-potch of impulses and contradictions which is life. It must present men as wholly virtuous or wholly vicious, wholly brave or wholly base. Most early art follows this tendency. Thersites in Homer is wholly a knave, Achilles is wholly a hero. The characters in Greek plays, and indeed in all great tragedies, are painted solely in blacks or whites, and for this reason are unlike life. The first method, then, of achieving unity is that of distorting life by undue simplification.

But it is not always necessary to distort. We may achieve the same result by selection. Select from

the confusing welter of human passion and motive only those traits which are harmonious, which are, as we say, in character, and you still get your unity. You have destroyed your individual in the process, but that in this view is unimportant. Hence arises the art which aims at bowdlerizing its characters of all that makes them inconsistent, and we have the novels of Mr. Henry James. The characters of Henry James are animated by none of the grosser, or, shall I say, the more ordinary passions: these have all been selected away. Avarice, love of scandal, snobbishness, curiosity and esoteric chastities are the motives by which they are moved: lust and hate, jealousy and cruelty are unknown. We are presented with a distant stage set with ghost-like characters, who discourse in etiolated voices on bloodless themes. I think it is Chesterton who said that they have no faces.

To arrive at unity, then, you must indulge in rigorous simplification or rigorous selection. In so doing you will move away from life: a result which will necessarily follow from the mere fact that life is not a unity. Life is composed of individuals none of whom are types: unity is composed of types who are individuals eviscerated of all that obscures the type.

Desiring unity, then, we shall set our faces against Realism at the outset. We shall be romantics. We shall look upon literature as a refuge from life, and we shall demand of it that it shall pay us in beauty for what we have lost in reality.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: You mean in appearance: life on my view is not the reality.

ANTHONY: I am sorry, Professor. I should have said in appearance, which is what, on your view, the world of common sense mistakes for reality: but I am talking in my terms now, so, when I

use the word reality, please understand me to speak in the language of the plain man. Once accept the divorce from life in the interests of an abstract reality conceived as a unity, and your writer may concentrate on the creation of beauty with a good conscience. The world is rightly left behind, for is it not sordid and ugly ? And with the world well left, the artist may henceforth spin from his imagination fantasies and romances flawless in beauty and perfect in form, provided only that they are unities.

The academic mind, then, will suspect the Realist and love the Romantic. The academic critic puts his women upon a pedestal and wraps his artist in cotton wool. A dreamer of dreams, a singer of songs, a spinner of fantasies, this artist who must not soil himself with the problems of the world ; who must not dull his vision by contact with the real ; who must not pollute the pure streams of his inspiration by a douche from Aldgate Pump ! The artist may imagine, but he must not observe ; he may dream his life, but he may not live his dreams.

Hence any attempt on the part of the artist to bring himself into touch with actual problems is regarded as a derogation from his high vocation. He must not intrude upon the preserves of politics and the practical man. The academic mind hates the artist who turns reformer. Let him create things of beauty, let his vision remain remote, let him sketch Utopias for the future, let him in fact do anything but busy himself with the present, and the academic mind will give him his due as the embellisher and decorator of life. But preach he must not. Thus Ruskin was chidden for his incursion into political theory ; he should have gone on describing pretty pictures and fine scenery and remained an artist. Tolstoy was told that he would have done well to leave religion alone and

continue to write fiction. In our own day, Max Beerbohm the cartoonist, the spoilt darling of the critics, when he caricatured the features of artists and poets, is seriously admonished by the daily press when he produces caricatures of modern politicians, which teach the same lesson and point the same moral as the fourth satire in *Gulliver's Travels*. What business has an artist to see Yahoos in figures of modern eminence, and in so doing to pass an implied criticism on the society which has raised them to that eminence and consents to keep them there ?

Even Shaw has never been rated at his true worth, or, if he has, his reputation has been extorted from the critics almost against their will. Why ? Because he is not content with constructing plots and drawing characters ; he insists on writing plays on modern problems and prefacing them with strictures upon the age. It is only to-day, when he has grown mellow with years and his problems are in process of solution or of being superseded by others, that his greatness is generally conceded.

I ask you to observe the fact of this hostility to the artist who meddles, and to note two things in relation to it. In the first place, it disguises its real character by invoking in its support that theory of the function of the artist as the creator of beauty, which you so eloquently expressed. In order that beauty may be achieved the work of art must be a unity. In order that it may be a unity it must turn its back on the irrelevances of life, and by selection and simplification produce what is called art. Realism, then, according to the critics who implicitly adopt your view, must fall short of what is greatest in literature, and propaganda and pamphleteering are outside the proper sphere of the artist.

In the second place, the encouragement given to

artists who create an unreal world instead of criticizing the real one, is obviously derivable from those general tendencies of the academic mind we have already considered. Beauty, it is said, is one of the eternal verities. Hence the writer engaged in producing works of art, whose virtues are those of style and manner, conveying, as he professes to convey, truths which are true for all time, conveys no special message for his own. On the other hand the artist who feels himself the vehicle of a truth of which the society of his own day stands in urgent need, will produce work which, while its value as a permanent possession of mankind may be negligible, has a special relevance and therefore a special value for its own. And its value in the present will stand or fall by the extent to which implicitly or explicitly it brings about a change in the present, and by virtue of so doing antagonizes all the vested interests in the thought and morals which it seeks to supersede. It is only natural then that writers whose work, being the vehicle of a direct inspiration from life, points forward, as I maintain, along the road which society must travel, should provoke the opposition of critics of established reputations and authority, who will be only the more eager by contrast to welcome work which, enshrining the everlasting truths of all time, has no unpalatable ones to convey to its own.

(2) *The Emphasis on Form*

I now propose to turn to a second tendency in art, or rather in artistic criticism, which may, I think, be traced directly to your view. I have spoken generally of the tendency of the academic mind to subordinate substance to form. I now want to draw your attention to a particular expression of

this attitude as a canon of artistic and literary criticism. What I have in mind is the insistence on the importance of form in works of art.

Now it is clear that if we accept your view that the value of a work of genius remains constant, that value must be identified very largely with the form which the work assumes. You must, I think, admit that the matter of many even of the greatest works loses something of its significance by the passage of centuries. Those old comedies of Aristophanes, in which every gibe told and every shaft had its target, are now more remarkable for the fertility and exuberance of the writer's wit than for its appropriateness : wit loses its edge when it has ceased to be topical. We may admire Pope in the abstract, but the full enjoyment of his malice died with his contemporaries. If value then is to be permanent, it must be largely bound up with excellence of form.

I do not want in this discussion to enter into the old controversy as to the relation between form and matter in literature and art. We shall doubtless agree that it is impossible in theory to draw any clear line between form and matter, or to say, " Here matter ends and form begins." We should, I imagine, nevertheless agree that in practice it is possible to speak of them as though they were distinct, and that excellence of both is essential in works of the highest kind, although any particular work may be pre-eminent in the one rather than in the other. Personally I should weight the scales every time in favour of matter, you probably in favour of form. But would you agree with my view that after the lapse of centuries the value of a work of art must be sought almost entirely in its form ?

Professor Cameron : Very largely, I should say. I agree with you that after a time the matter may

lose significance ; though not, of course, in philosophy.

ANTHONY : Precisely ! Your attitude to form bears out what I am saying of the academic view. In order, however, that we may see exactly what it is that this view may involve, let us consider its *reductio ad absurdum*, which is gloriously reached in its attitude to the Classics.

Form in the Classics

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Surely you are not going to drag us through the classical education controversy ! All the arguments for and against the Classics have been repeated *ad nauseam*. Let us then agree upon three things and be done with it : first, the Classics are distinctly useful from the educational point of view, and a thorough knowledge of them confers good taste ; second, they are not so useful as their supporters pretend ; third, the tendency to over-rate the value of the Classics is largely economic. Teaching the Classics notoriously fits a man for nothing except to go on teaching the Classics ; the livelihood of many academic persons depends, therefore, upon the continued acceptance of the belief that the Classics are all-important : while the Universities demand Classics, the public schools must supply the demand, and the preparatory schools must prepare for the public schools.

I think I have summed up everything that need be said by intelligent men about the Classics in these days. I cannot see that any of it is relevant to our present discussion.

ANTHONY : Your conciseness is admirable ; there is, indeed, nothing left to say about the Classics, except one thing. You have overlooked one factor

in their popularity, and it is this : while the form of the Classics remains intact their matter has lost most, if not all, of its significance. The Classics are not about anything which could conceivably be of importance to anyone to-day. Who cares for the rights and wrongs of the quarrel between Cicero and Catiline, or for the political significance of Demosthenes's speeches against Philip ? As to Virgil, it is doubtful whether he was ever the vehicle of a direct inspiration from life ; he was too preoccupied with his relation to Homer ; but what is there even in Homer that could by the wildest stretch of imagination contain a message for us to-day ? The thought of all these men is out of date ; it is barren and lifeless ; all that remains is the form, a mere husk.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Surely you are rather letting your arguments run away with you, sir. This is wild talk ; it is the veriest commonplace that the Classics are full of lessons for to-day. Analogies with modern life crop up on almost every page.

ANTHONY : I know it is a commonplace, and, like most commonplaces, it is quite untrue.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Oh, fiddlesticks. Take any great classical writer, take Thucydides for instance. He is full of sage reflections on the politicians and parties of his age, that apply to the politicians and parties of all ages. He is a store-house of political wisdom, which our present rulers ignore with lamentable results.

ANTHONY : But is he ? I know that that is the kind of thing that persons, who have a sufficient knowledge of Greek to give them a vested interest in Thucydides, have formed the habit of saying. They bleat about his unapproachable sagacity, his remarkable detachment : he seems to provoke that sort of thing. But personally I have never been able to find in his vaunted reflections anything but a string of platitudes, which are the stock-in-

trade of every political rhetorician. He tells you, for instance, that selfish aggrandisement always meets with its own Nemesis—a rather pompous way of saying that pride goes before a fall. He remarks that when Athens was struck by the plague, the restraints imposed by society upon individual behaviour gave way, and what are commonly called morals went by the board. Naturally! We all of us know that; Defoe said the same, but nobody thought him particularly wise for saying it.

And does it after all seem to you so extraordinarily penetrating to have noticed that "fear when attended by strength causes greater alarm to one's enemies"? Yet that is a pretty fair specimen of the remarks in the celebrated speeches.

PROFESSOR CAMERON: The wisdom is there and the detachment: you can make any writer ridiculous by arbitrarily choosing your extracts. But, leaving Thucydides out of the question, you must admit that a knowledge of Greek history is of inestimable value for the potential modern statesman. The Peloponnesian war, for example, had many features in common with the recent great war. Ancient Athens presents a parallel with modern England: study her history and you see working clearly, simply and on a small stage, the motives and forces which the greater complexity of modern society makes it so much harder to disentangle. Reading Greek history is like looking at the world through a pair of inverted opera glasses; the world is seen small but very clear.

ANTHONY: That, too, is commonly said, and I think it is for the most part terribly misleading. It has led people to endeavour to analyze the forces at work in modern society into the same elements as those, with which their study of Greek history has made them familiar.

I have already spoken at some length on the

subjective character of our interpretation of his tory : what you look for in history you will find, whether it is there or not ; and the result is that modern phenomena, seen in relation to a false analogy with ancient Greece which is taken for granted, are seen in wrong perspective.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : The elements of a political situation are ever the same : they derive their roots from human nature.

ANTHONY : They are not. There are many important and fundamental aspects in which the world of ancient Greece was radically different from the world of to-day, and the differences are of such a kind as to render any interpretation of modern phenomena based on a knowledge of Greek history fundamentally misleading.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Mention them.

ANTHONY : Surely that would take us even further afield than we are straying at the moment. I cannot embark on such a discussion if I am ever to resume the application of the Life Force to literature.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : I am interested largely because I disagree. Can you not briefly adumbrate ?

ANTHONY : I will mention just two differences of the kind in question. In the first place, Greek history is susceptible not at all, or susceptible very little, of economic interpretation. Where ways of life and habits of thought and action are largely customary, they are in themselves sufficient to explain the activities of states on ordinary, political lines. They were so customary in Greece, despite all the *flair* for the novel of the Athenian intellectuals, to a much greater extent than is the case to-day. Hence the student, steeped in the history and literature of Greece, will be apt to overlook the economic motive in modern society almost as much as Marx over-emphasizes it.

In the second place, the size of the modern state renders it unamenable to the influence of individuals or even of groups of individuals to a hitherto unprecedented extent. The Greek city state could be swayed by a few men : the ambitions, the eloquence, the love affairs even, of one public man could determine its destinies : human will and effort counted. Even the democracies, where such existed, could be really representative. In a modern state this is not the case. So complex are the strands that condition events, so vast the machinery of government, that what actually happens is the result not of human will or effort but of the fortuitous interaction of a number of hidden forces, whose outcome none may foresee and whose genesis none may detect. The result is that the thinker or statesman who knows his Greek or Roman history, will be misled into thinking that the wishes of the people count today, that a definite line of policy can still be put into effect, or that the will of an outstanding personality can be made to matter. He will, in fact, underestimate the deterministic factor in modern politics. For this reason the record of Greek and Roman history is practically useless as a guide to current events. But let us return to classical literature. Do you still contend that its matter retains life ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : I still think your thesis outrageously untrue. Take Satire, Juvenal, for instance——

ANTHONY : Used society as a mere peg to hang his rhetorical hat on. Not an ounce of sincere feeling behind it : Pope was better, Swift a giant beside him !

PROFESSOR CAMERON : You talk of new and subversive thought : what about Lucretius ?

ANTHONY : He may have been original in his day, but is now hopelessly out of date ! He is only

useful as a stick for the Rationalists to beat their drum with, and pretty hollow it sounds.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Tacitus ?

ANTHONY : A retailer of court scandal ; an indigent snob grousing at efficiency because it was maintained by the wrong men. No, I think I have said enough to show how futile and irrelevant for modern purposes is the matter of these Classics ! Their form remains, I grant you, and that is why they are cherished and boosted by the academic mind. They are all form and no matter ; how very convenient ! Concentrate upon them, steep the young mind in them, and you will render it alike impervious to the promptings of the Life Force in itself, and deaf to the message it is delivering through others. It is recounted that in the Middle Ages the monks insisted upon the composition of Latin Verses, because it provided adequate occupation for the minds of intelligent young men, and prevented them from undertaking inconvenient, scientific inquiries. The insertion of Latin Verses into the mediæval curriculum exemplifies the objects which the teaching of the Classics has been designed to serve ever since.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : But the endeavour to master these languages with their complexity and logical structure is itself a challenge to thought.

ANTHONY : No ! I agree that they make you think ; but do they ever let you stop to think ? If you did, you would see the futility and aimlessness of the whole process. The common presumption that, to enjoy classical literature, it is necessary to learn the original tongue in which the thought is conveyed, is in itself an admission that it is not the thought which is valued. For the thought can be conveyed adequately in translation : in translation only the form is lost. The horror which the suggestion that the Classics may be read in translations provokes in the academic mind is the

measure of the almost exclusive value that is placed upon form as opposed to matter. Pressed to admit this, your Classic will, it is true, concoct a theory to the effect that in translation even the thought is lost, some subtle shades of meaning and expression being detected only in the original, and evaporating in the process of translation like the bouquet of an old wine. But this theory deceives nobody who has taken the pains to do any translation work himself, in the course of which he discovers that it is only his own incompetence, and not any inherent unwillingness in his material, that prevents him from conveying every *naunce* of classical thought, however clumsily, into his own tongue.

If you read the Classics for their substance, translations will serve the purpose of the original; if you read them for the form, the original alone will serve. The fact that, with a few exceptions in favour of Plato and Aristotle, nobody does voluntarily read the Classics in translations, which are chiefly used as cribs by schoolboys who are supposed to be reading them in the original, is evidence first, that the literary form is the sole excuse for their cultivation, and second, that nobody cares twopence one way or the other about their substance. The academic mind does right to subordinate matter to form in the Classics, for the matter is now practically non-existent; but it is wrong to invest the form with a false value in the interests of which the minds of men are turned away from matter which is living. Form which enshrines matter that is dead is like the stick of a spent rocket.

Thus the Classics hang like an incubus round the neck of literature, and the Life Force, thrusting its new inspirations into the unconscious minds of men, finds itself choked with the litter of its past achievements.

(3) *The Insistence on Style*

I turn now to a third tendency in art and literature which, on my view, derives directly from your theory of the function of art and literature. And here I should perhaps apologize for the unnecessary heat which manifested itself in some of my remarks on the Classics. It is, you understand, my intention at the moment simply to depict these tendencies without comment of any kind : it will, I am afraid, be sufficiently evident that I regret them, but equally do I regret that I should, at any rate at this stage, have conveyed such an impression. My reasons for regarding these tendencies as injurious will appear later. For the moment I ask you to forgive remarks which deplore this or that as obstructive to the purposes of the Life Force, and to dismiss them as incidental dogmatisms which I shall hope to support in due course.

It is sufficiently understood, then, that in describing this third tendency, my object is simply to throw into clear relief exactly what it is that your theory involves in practice.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Very well ! I quite understand your feelings about the Classics. Memories of syntax, irregular verbs, paradigms, and gender lines still rankle.

ANTHONY : They do. I have already noted two elements in literature which have a particular attraction for the academic mind, namely, unity and form. I now propose to add a third, which is style. The academic mind places great value on style for the same reason as it values unity and form. Style, which is one of the elements which contribute to form, is permanent : it remains constant while matter fades ; insistence on the value of style supports, therefore, the theory that literature possesses permanent value, and that it is its

business to achieve beauty instead of to disseminate propaganda.

Now you can trace, running like a continuous thread throughout the whole history of literature, a succession of writers and schools of writers who believed in style. Pliny the Younger and Seneca, Villon and Verlaine, Walter Pater, and Oscar Wilde and Stevenson, these were all men who believed that it behoved them to take pains to acquire what they called a style, as a sort of necessary preliminary measure before they could begin to write. Instead of regarding language as a vehicle for conveying thought and feeling, and style as merely that kind of language which conveys them in the most appropriate way, they have adopted an attitude to style which is like that of a conjuror who uses his apparatus before an audience which does not know the trick. Style, to put it at its highest, is an element of beauty, a mere device to sugar the pill of thought ; but by writers of the school I am describing, the function of style has been so exaggerated, that the way in which they said things came to seem more important to them than the things they said.

Now, personally I am doubtful whether good style can ever be consciously achieved. It is like pleasure in that, if directly pursued, it eludes you : but, like pleasure and also like beauty, it comes incidentally and as it were by accident, to adorn and reward the efforts of those who are actively and strenuously engaged in something else. Now what is that something else ? The striving to give expression to the light within you ; the being entirely and wholly wrapped up in some message that you wish to deliver ; the feeling that this message and the saying of it is of supreme importance, and the endeavouring to say it clearly and briefly and then have done with it. These things, which are the surrendering of oneself to the

inspiration of the Life Force, must come first; and if the Life Force is really prompting your words, you may rest assured that it will take good care that they are clothed in a style which will secure for them attention and respect. Thus Swift, who was perhaps the greatest prose writer in the English language, achieved his style by the simple process of being too wrapped up in what he had to say to have leisure to notice how he was saying it; too fiercely indignant with the abuses he satirized to have the patience to polish his shafts.

Provided, then, that the matter be living, the style will accommodate itself naturally to its requirements. Moreover, different matters require different styles: the Life Force must be suffered to experiment with the methods by which its message is to be presented. Style, therefore, should be free and various, not confined within a framework of copybook rules evolved by pedants, not clipped and groomed like a box hedge. Should a living experiment be at the mercy of a pack of grammarians, to be stabbed with their commas and their colons? No! It should thrive and blossom freely according to its self-chosen laws; should change continually and develop, discarding outgrown members with ease, and fulfilling the function of a midwife, not of an obstruction to the message of the Life Force.

Good style is, in short, a grace which adorns the writings of a powerful and original mind. It is only in an intellectual soil that is both deep and rich that style can blossom. It is in a real sense a luxury, and like any luxury it is dependent on a good income, an income of original thought: it comes when a man has ceased to grapple with his subject for mastery, and has begun to be at play with it.

I am afraid I have been betrayed again into airing my own views by way of comment, instead

of confining myself to a simple statement of the foibles of the academic mind. But my polemic on style will serve its purpose. It will throw into clearer relief the opposing view which is, I fear, the prevalent one in literature. I think I have already mentioned a maxim observed of good architects, to the effect that the architect should decorate a construction, but should not construct a decoration.

MR. BANKS : Have you ? I don't remember.

ANTHONY : Whether I have or not, you may take it that the undue importance attributed by the academic mind to style is one form of constructing a decoration.

Now this insistence on the style and form of presentation serves the important purpose of distracting attention from the matter presented. Just as there has always been a school of writers who cultivated style as an end in itself, so there has always been a school of critics whose criticism has been primarily directed to the manner instead of to the matter of literature. Henry James and George Moore will serve as examples of the type, a type who believe in the existence of a thing called good writing, that is to say good writing as such. These critics, if pressed, would have to admit, assuming them to be logical, that there exists no reason in theory why a novel about Willesden Junction, or a lyric on sardine tins, should not achieve a literary excellence as high as that of the works of Conrad or of Keats.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : I admit that much literary criticism is devoted to style, to expression and to diction, to what, in short, you call the form of presentation. I think that it is rightly so devoted since, as you have remarked, the value of these elements is constant and remains imperishable, even when the matter has lost its significance. I admit this because I am talking in your language,

and assuming for the moment that it is possible, for the purposes of discussion, to effect the complete distinction between form and matter which, in spite of your opening disclaimer, you are seeking to make. My own view, though I insert it here in parenthesis, is that the two are inseparable ; and the fact that it is impossible to say where the one ends and the other begins seems to me to vitiate many of your arguments. Assuming, however, that the distinction can be made for the purposes of the discussion, what I do *not* admit is that the insistence on form in general, and on style in particular, is deliberately designed to distract men's attention from new and subversive thought in literature, or that in point of fact it has that effect.

The Case of Mr. Shaw

ANTHONY : Very well : let us take a concrete instance, Take the case of Shaw. Now Shaw is a teacher, prophet and reformer, if ever there was one. His bias is Puritanical ; his object, to expose outworn conventions and to spring-clean institutions which are choked with the cobwebs of hypocrisy and pretence. Instances of such institutions are family life, the medical profession and the party system. It so happens that he has a sense of humour and can write good plays : the drama is, in fact, the vehicle by means of which he seeks to convey the Life Force inspiration which wells up within him.

What is the result ? Critics have combined to seize upon the form of his presentation, its dramatic virtuosity, and to ignore, or at best to write off as a series of mental fads and caprices, the doctrines they enshrine.

There has been a consistent attempt to regard

Shaw as a comedian, who either succeeds or fails in being funny, instead of as a prophet whose gospel is either true or false. His plays are criticized technically, and *Candida*, where the element of propaganda is most in abeyance, is preferred on grounds of unity and economy in construction. It is with the greatest difficulty that Shaw has established himself as a serious thinker, who passionately believes what he asserts, in face of the almost universal refusal to consider him in any other light than that of a popular buffoon, whose plays, being written for the sole purpose of entertaining the public, are accordingly to be judged solely by the criterion of whether they succeeded in doing so.

During the war Shaw succeeded in irritating the popular mind to a hitherto unprecedented extent, and this circumstance, combined with the fact that of late years he has written plays which contain so much of philosophic dialogue and so little of popular entertainment, that no theatrical manager could, until recent years, afford to produce them, has to some small extent succeeded in generating the conviction that Shaw does not care two straws for his power to amuse, in comparison with his capacity to expound the truth that is in him. This conviction is, of course, correct: no real artist cares about his art any more than the chemist cares about the sugar on his pills. What he does care about is the truth which his art seeks to convey, and Shaw being a great man, has at last managed to drive home this elementary maxim, in respect of himself at least, in the teeth of the united opposition of the critics, who insisted on prating only of his sense of the theatre and of the brilliance of his wit.

So much for the world's attitude to Shaw in general; now consider the attitude of one typical critic to his style in particular. Shaw, as is well

known, possesses in a high degree the power of writing first-rate English prose. But the character of the prose shows that he sets very little store by it. It is chaste, austere and cold: it eschews epithets, it avoids hyperbole, it disdains all those adventitious trappings of ornament and artifice, of harmony and euphony, by which a writer like Pater strove to disguise the fundamental meagreness of his thought. It is evident at a glance that all Shaw cares about is expressing his ideas, and style is to him merely a device for enabling him to do this as forcibly as possible.

Now there was once a critic typical of the academic mind in his attitude to art and literature named Dixon Scott. Dixon Scott cared for fine writing, and he cared very little for anything else. As it is natural for a human being to look for what he values, and under suitable circumstances to insist that he has found it whether it is there to find or not, Dixon Scott wrote an article on Shaw, in which he speedily comes to the conclusion that Shaw's style is nothing but an intricate and elaborate conspiracy to make us believe that he cares nothing about style, when in reality the style itself shows that he regards it as of supreme importance. Admitting the obvious fact that, on the face of it, the style is as straightforward, as little ornate as it is possible for a good style to be, this critic proceeds to construct an ingenious theory to show that deliberate austerity is the most potent literary drug yet devised to bemuse the imaginations of readers. Every ancillary charm, it seems, is dourly and ruthlessly threshed out of Shaw's style; all emotional adjuncts are eschewed; there is an absence of metaphor; exclamation marks are lacking; apostrophes are barred. Why? Simply and solely in order that the senses may be so intoxicated, the imagination so dizzied by the effect of sheer speed achieved by these economies, that the

reason of the reader is willy-nilly seduced by the argument, and becomes, as it were, a mere plaything in the hands of the stylistic wizard. Ostensibly, Shaw's style is prose written to be uttered on the rapid levels of man to man speech; in reality, it retains unsuspected all those qualities of balance, rhythm and picturesqueness which are unabashedly displayed in the orthodox periods of classical oratory, and which sail into the mind's citadel by the more important senses, while the colloquialisms keep the common one engaged. Shaw's style is further compared to a level-thrusting bar of steel and to a swift-driving mechanism, while Shaw himself is envisaged as the romantic artist, whose object is to please and debauch the senses of his audience, not by the beauty of line, the depth of colour, the harmony of chords, or the pomp of high sounding words, but by the beauty and sensual ecstasy of sheer speed. Here, then, you have a sample of the attitude of the academic mind to a propagandist like Shaw.

Shaw saw this precious article, and I seem to remember some remarks of his by way of commentary that appeared in a review, or preface, or perhaps in a special article written in reply. Shaw bemoans the fact that people never will take him seriously; he comes to us, he tells us, with a gospel to preach, and people regard him as a licensed jester because he makes jokes: he comes with a political theory to demonstrate, and this fellow, Dixon Scott, hails him as a mere literary stylist, a weaver of word tapestries because he writes good English.

When, for instance, Shaw points out that the infant mortality rate in an East End slum is just about double that of a fashionable suburb, or that the only way man can recover from the effects of a civilization, whose main achievement consists in

the command it has won over nature, is by retiring for long periods into the country where nature is still in undisputed command over men, the response of the academic mind, as typified by Mr. Dixon Scott, is to ejaculate, " What lucid presentation of fact," " What crushing and mordant wit," " What unexpected irony," " What masterly economy of material." It is as if, says Shaw, a man on hearing a cry of " Fire " were to call attention to the distinct enunciation, the remarkable resonance, and the vibrant, bell-like tones which characterized the voice, but beyond this announcement of the æsthetic gratification imparted to his sense of hearing, were to take no action to discover where the fire was or to put it out.

" You young whelp," says Shaw in effect to Mr. Dixon Scott, " here am I telling you of scandals and infamies enough to make any decent man's blood boil, and the only effect I have is to draw your elegant attention to the excellent, literary balance of my sentences. In God's name drop these æsthetic fiddlesticks and tell me what you are going to do about it." Shaw's outburst was typical not of himself alone. The indignation aroused in all great artists by those who insist on regarding them as the mere creators of beautiful or wonderful things, finds perhaps its chief expression in the contempt of one of the greatest of them all, for those who begged him to work miracles. Knowing that men's minds are as sleepy as their inquisitiveness is wide awake, he foresaw that they would be only too ready to snatch at the slightest excuse for forgetting the difficult message in the wonder of the miracles that accompanied its delivery, just as in our day Dixon Scott was ready enough to use his admiration for the style as an excuse for shutting his intelligence to the lesson the style conveyed.

It is this question of style which constitutes, I

think, the clearest instance of that sacrifice of matter to form which I have spoken of as characteristic of the academic mind. And this sacrifice, as I have tried to show, derives both its support and its sanction from that theory which regards a work of art as possessing permanent and changeless value.

Summary of Preceding Argument

PROFESSOR CAMERON : A very interesting diatribe on style ! But really it is highly questionable whether any body of writers or critics holds the exaggerated views which the necessity of strengthening your argument induces you to attribute to them. Let us assume, however, that they do ; you have still to establish the fact that the stylistic tendency is harmful. And even if we assume this further proposition to be established, does it follow that it is harmful in the special sense that is relevant for your purpose ?

ANTHONY : In what sense do you mean ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : You hold, I believe, that the Life Force evolving in an alien world of matter must proceed by the method of trial and error. Any experiment, the result of which retards its purpose instead of furthering it, will, I take it, be harmful, and may in due course expect to be scrapped. Now it seems that you regard insistence on literary style as harmful in this way, at any rate in so far as it obscures the significance of the matter the form conveys : but you have not up to the present produced any evidence in favour of this contention.

ANTHONY : I am about to do so. I have been content so far to indicate certain tendencies in art and literature, both creative and critical, which

are directly derivable from theories such as that which you have put forward. If we are agreed, as I take it we are, both that these tendencies exist and that your theory justifies them, I can proceed to the second part of my demonstration which will endeavour to show in what way they are harmful. Let us consider separately the effects of the type of literature in question, first upon the consumer, and secondly upon the producer, bearing in mind that what we have to say will apply in an equal degree, *mutatis mutandis*, to the artist and to his public.

I. The Effects of Art that Aims at Pleasing

What, then, in the first place, is the effect of the academic artist upon the public ? We agree that it is his function to please them. Very well then, he must invent romances !

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Why must he necessarily invent romances ?

ANTHONY : Because most men's lives being drab and grey—lives whose tragedy is that nothing ever happens—the artist who seeks only to please must portray lives that are vivid and striking, in which the tragedy is that things will not stop happening. When he is a good artist, he writes *Treasure Island* : when he is a bad one, detective stories in the *Boy's Own Paper*.

By the same token he must give us stories of hectic and passionate love, in which persons with impossible emotions make sacrifices upon the altars of ridiculous affections. Why again ? Because, you say, it is the business of the artist to please. Most people's lives are loveless, or if they love, people love like grocers and love for a few months ; yet most of us are in love with love, and if we cannot

get it in our lives, we must get the next best thing to it in our books and pictures. So the good writer pleases us with *Sappho* and *Lorna Doone*, the bad one with *The Way of an Eagle* and *The Rosary*. Our lives, again, are lives of prose : they consist of a buying of things, a making of the money wherewith to buy them, and a perpetual travelling to and from the places in which we make it to the places in which we consume what it buys, the former being called cities and the latter suburbs. As we spend about four-fifths of our time in obtaining the means to make life possible and only about one-fifth in living, our lack of practice produces the inevitable result that we badly bungle the art of life, while, as we all insist on leaving our offices to travel to our dormitories and our dormitories to travel to our offices at the same time, with the inevitable consequences of bustle and overcrowding, I leave it to you to estimate how much of beauty and how much of poetry clothe our everyday experience.

Men whose waking vision is bounded by bricks and mortar, and whose lives are lives of hurry and prose, demand for their pleasure and relaxation pictures of nature which are called landscapes, and poems of elegance and grace which are called sonnets and lyrics. Hence the artist whose business it is, on your theory, to cater for the public taste by producing beauty, must keep up a perpetual output of pretty pictures and pretty poems.

Now, having reduced the artist to the role of an entertainer, what is the most that we can ask of him ? That he should so refine our senses with beautiful pictures and beautiful music, that seeing and hearing, instead of remaining a mere passive receptivity on the part of the senses, should become consciously critical acts vigorously demanding fine buildings, good furniture, suitable household utensils, and pleasant sounds for their daily use and

enjoyment, and protesting equally vigorously against over-furnishing, over-clothing, foul air, ugly sights, and inharmonious sounds. At its highest then, on your view, it is the business of the artist by cultivating our senses, to help us to see beauty and to resent ugliness. At its lowest the function of art becomes the satisfaction of an appetite. The artist supplies the craving for romance and sentimentality engendered by the unnatural conditions of modern civilization, much as the pastrycook supplies the appetite for cakes, the products of the two being not dissimilar, except that it is only fair to the good pastrycook to admit that, while his confections are compounded of good cream, butter, sugar and eggs, the second-rate artist uses as his subject-matter nothing but an unwholesome hash of cheap emotions. Where the real artist is like a chemist who produces to purge, the second-rate artist is like a confectioner who produces to please.

Now you will not, I imagine, be disposed to deny the deleterious effect of this kind of art, the art of confectionery. It can debauch a man's mind, enthral his senses and enfeeble his imagination, until he comes to regard the world of romance as a sort of glorified pleasure-garden set with amorous intrigues. What is more, this kind of art and this view of the function of art are deliberately encouraged by the academic mind, because the art of the confectioner acts as a narcotic, turning a man's thoughts from effort to pleasure, and concentrating all his energies upon the endeavour to obtain for himself the life of amusement, which the heroes of his romantic novels have led him to regard as an ideal. Just as the classics are used to sate the appetite for thought and to divert curiosity for the new into admiration of the old, so are poets and singers, painters and pretty women, and all the appanages of the romantic life

employed to dope and drug the natural aspirations of the young to realize the better world that might be, and to charm them into a sensuous acquiescence in the world that is.

What you will be less disposed to admit is that even good art, when it makes the production of beauty its *raison d'être*, produces an effect which is not only not dissimilar, but is even more harmful, in the sense that the best minds and the most ardent spirits, which are soon cloyed to surfeit by the sickly sweet confections of the romantic poet and novelist, are often permanently led astray, and withdrawn from the service of the Life Force, by the nobler productions of the purely decorative artist.

The Worship of Women

This subversion of purpose is achieved in a number of ways. Not the least important results from the fact that the continual enjoyment of decorative art leads to the worship of women. As a broad generalization I would be prepared to assert that all serious art which is not the vehicle of some evolutionary thrust of the Life Force, which is not, that is to say, concerned to suggest a new conception of the good life for the individual, of man's duty to his fellows in society, or of the function, status and destiny of life as a whole in relation to the universe, is concerned with the idealization of women ; with the result that a man who is led to believe the beautiful myths that music and painting and poetry have told him of woman, is tempted to devote his life to her pursuit and cultivation, believing that in her alone is to be found the end and purpose of existence, when he should be going about the business of the Life

Force. And the woman, having the function to fulfil for which the Force created *her*, is only too ready to acquiesce in this state of affairs, and to utilize the ingenious device of silence with which she has been purposely endowed by the Force, to allow the man to mistake the ideal visions of her beauty, purity and kindness, which he has culled from his reading of romances, for reality, and his own dreams of ambition and achievement for hers. But, once the bait of beauty has been swallowed and the woman's purpose fulfilled, she shows no compunction in disillusioning the unfortunate idolater and is quite prepared to turn his life into a little hell of scolding and reproach, unless he is willing to become a mere breadwinner for her children, by consenting to do the work for which the world is prepared to pay him, instead of insisting on following the light which is in him. Now a man's inner light is simply his awareness of the urge of the Life Force, prompting and directing him to certain kinds of activity, and, as the world is not only not ready for such activity, but is determined on grounds of conservatism to resist it as strenuously as it can, it follows nine times out of ten that the world is much more likely to put the pioneer of the Life Force into prison for following his subversive impulses, than to repay him with the livelihood which is necessary for the upkeep of his wife and children.

Of course when the man happens to be an artist, that is to say a person whose inheritance from life is as direct and powerful as that of the woman herself, he will swallow the bait and refuse to take the hook, enjoying love and beauty as a recreation, yet refusing to allow them and the responsibilities which their enjoyment brings in its train, to turn him from his purpose. But for most the blandishments of love and of romance prove too strong, and the would-be artist subsides into the bread-

winner. And each time this process occurs, each time a man falls a victim to poetry and art, and by consequence to women whom poetry and art have idealised for him, the academic mind may congratulate itself on withdrawing yet one more recruit from the band of those whom the Life Force has generated to break through the bonds of the past and to pave the way for the advance of the future.

It happens sometimes that the shock of disillusionment, which follows the substitution of the world of reality for that of romance, is sufficiently violent to disgust even those who are not first-rate artists in their own right with the life of breadwinning. Such cases are normally those in which the woman proves on close acquaintance to be devoid of all natural attractions, except those with which the Life Force has adventitiously endowed her. The emancipation of the first-rate artist joined to such a spouse is a comparatively easy process. Even the second-rater sometimes achieves it. Thus it will be found that an abnormal proportion of the men who have left their mark upon the world were married to scolds or drunkards, who, after first making the life of domestic acquiescence intolerable, roundly abused their husbands for unpractical idealism because they insisted upon their wives sharing the pittance which was all that their refusal to do any work but the work which they felt called upon to do could win for them, and for selfishness and infidelity when they incontinently left them.

In order that I may exonerate this excursion upon women from the charge of a digression, let me just briefly run over the steps which have led to it from our main theme.

The academic mind and the theory of art which it countenances, encourage, I say, the production of decorative art, insisting that it is the business of the artist to entertain and not to teach.

The effect of this attitude is to lull the discontents

of the young, and to direct their creative activities to the pursuit of ideals of beauty, of love and of so-called art, by which is meant art which glorifies beauty and love.

By this means inconvenient activities calculated to disturb the academic mind or to modify the structure of society are banked down, much as if you were to stay a healthy appetite for roast beef with a spoonful of treacle.

The methods by which decorative art achieves this result are various. In general they consist in concentrating a man's attention upon the life of the senses, thereby producing the dilettante, who unfits himself for the serious purposes of life by his pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp of beauty whether in pictures, in music, in sculpture, in poetry, or in nature. More particularly it is the effect of decorative art so to inflame the imagination with the beauty with which it invests woman, that under its influence a man either ignores in her pursuit the impulses which the Life Force has implanted in him, or is deluded into the belief that woman will give strength to his aim and inspiration to his teaching, whereby his effectiveness in life will be increased. The belief that with a woman at his side a man may do great things in the world is a common form of this delusion, which is, of course, sedulously supported by the woman. Sooner or later the man is disillusioned ; but by the time he realizes that he is for the woman merely an instrument for winning bread for her children, his ambition has departed and his revolutionary ardour has cooled. Now I assert that this chain of occurrences, which I cannot but regard as harmful from the Life Force point of view, is strengthened and welded together by that peculiar view of the function of the artist which you hold, and which is exploited by the academic mind with the objects I have described.

MR. BANKS : But if the artist may not please us under pain of debauching our imagination and enfeebling our will in the terrifying way you describe, what is the poor fellow to do ? Would you confine art to the writing of tracts, and the portrayal of pictorial hells ? And how are we to tell in any one case whether the work of the artist is a true embodiment of the purposes of the Life Force, or merely one of those pleasant confections of emotion to which you have referred so slightingly ? And why should we not enjoy those confections anyway ?

ANTHONY : You ask a number of different questions, Mr. Banks, most of which I have already answered implicitly. As to why we should not enjoy the confections and be content, my answer is that a permanent diet of méringues turns a man into a stick of sugar-candy, when it does not make him sick. The life that consists of the pursuit of pleasure is a tiring life : and the art that aims solely at pleasing by the representation of beauty is in the end a tiring art. Slavery to beauty, like slavery to pleasure, is intolerable servitude, the only kind of slavery that is at all bearable being slavery to the purpose of evolution which we were created to serve, and in serving which our *raison d'être* consists. Literature that disturbs and deranges our ideas, that hints a new morality, aspires to a new deity, or suggests a new conception of personal relations, may not be pleasing in the strict sense of the word, but it is never tiring : the proof of which is that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, an austere work, difficult to follow and demanding concentration, survives as a second bible, whereas the plays of Etheredge and Wycherley, whose sole aim is to please by variations upon the theme of sensual intrigue, are scarcely known outside the libraries of connoisseurs in pornographic literature.

The Marks of Great Art

As to how the art which expresses the purpose of the Life Force is to be distinguished from imitative art which seeks only to please by reflecting the present, there is no certain mark of differentiation. In general it is left to time to demonstrate the difference between the propaganda of the day which survives as many ages as it takes mankind to learn its lesson, and the work of beauty produced as a joy for all time which does not survive the age that gave it birth. A fair index to the quality of any work of art may, however, be sought in the attitude of the academic mind. I have already noted that the academic mind regards the artist as a sort of refined entertainer, whose function it is to please and to divert. But once the power to please, which all artists possess, is transformed into the power to annoy, the academic mind becomes hostile. For where the artist exercises the power to annoy, he does so in virtue of the fact that his art is the vehicle of new thought. Compare the panegyrics lavished upon the first two sonatas and the first symphony of Beethoven, in which he gloriously imitated Haydn, with the uniformly hostile reception of the Eroica which broke new ground.

I have had occasion at several stages in to-day's discussion and in that of yesterday to draw attention to this antagonism of the academic mind to life's experiments, the reasons for it, and the numerous devices in education and in literary and artistic criticism in which it expresses itself. The academic mind is the mind of old men : its stock of imagination and impulse being exhausted, it is impervious to their manifestations in others. Thus in the emergence of new ideas it can see only a development which threatens its own

position. Being too inelastic to assimilate them, it stigmatizes them as erroneous in the world of thought, and in the sphere of music and pictorial art denounces as bad taste such modern developments as, for example, the Cubist movement or the music of Stravinsky.

But just as the hostility of the academic mind is the surest guarantee of vitality in the movement it dislikes, so is the process by which that hostility fades into acquiescence a sign that the movement in question has fulfilled its purpose. Such a development signifies that current thought has absorbed the new set of ideas and readjusted itself in consequence. The contemporary representatives of the academic mind, overborne, as they usually if not invariably are, by an authentic evolutionary push, are succeeded by those who are only too glad to give their benediction to the artistic development which their predecessors ruthlessly persecuted. Why ? Because the necessary readjustment of the community's stock of ideas having taken place, the vitality of the art which effects the readjustment is spent. Thought signs its own death warrant when it succeeds in imposing itself upon society, and the paradoxes of yesterday become the commonplaces of to-day. Thus it is the Nemesis of those who first tell the truth, that we think after a few years that we have always known what they have told us.

And when the new truth has found its place among the common stock of ideas, when its message has ceased to be a message, there is left only the form in which that message was delivered. The form is usually attractive, it must needs have been to have acted as a suitable vehicle for the message : but that does not mean that in the beauty of the form lay the value of the art. It does, however, enable us to understand why at this stage the academic mind can afford to abandon

its hostility, and, since the teeth of the innovator have been drawn by the acceptance of what he has to teach, to bestow a benediction upon its form. The form will now serve to strengthen the barricade which is perpetually being erected against the intrusion of the new, a barricade of which, as we have seen, the classics is one of the foundations.

An amusing instance of this process has recently occurred in connection with the plays of Mr. George Bernard Shaw. I am sorry to be compelled so frequently to refer to him, but as he is one of the few great artists of our time, he must needs be perpetually in demand as an example.

I need not recount in detail the antagonism which Shaw's Plays and Prefaces provoked in the early days. He was so generally abused as an anarchist in politics, a free lover in morals and an atheist in religion, that to the middle classes he came to seem a kind of bogey, a living embodiment of Satan, a conception which, it must be confessed, was not belied by his appearance. One play in particular, *Man and Superman*, written in 1903 and produced in 1906, was furiously denounced not only for the general countenance it was supposed to give to immorality, but for the topsy-turvydom of the sex relationships it envisaged. You may remember that, following Schopenhauer, it represented woman as in active pursuit of man, who, after ineffectual struggles, succumbs in the end to her superior sex strategy, much as the fly is entrapped in the web of the spider. This notion was regarded at the time as a flagrant contradiction of the facts and an insult to the modesty of women. Quite recently the play, in company with a number of other plays by Mr. Shaw, has been reproduced at the Hampstead Repertory Theatre. It at once became apparent that the mind of the community, upon which the theory

expressed in 1906 had been working unconsciously in the interval, had moved up to the level of thought at which the theory had been conceived, with the result that the ideas which had previously been too far in advance of current thought to appear even moderately rational, were now accepted as commonplaces with which the audience were only too familiar. The paradoxical Shaw was in fact merely dull. The inevitable consequence followed: the academic mind at once recognized Shaw as an artist, and began to acclaim the constructive power, the character drawing and the witty dialogue of his plays.

By this token we may know that the message of Shaw has been delivered and that the matter of his play has spent its force. All great art is subjected to this process. It is anathematized when it is new and accepted when it is dull. It has something to say to its own generation which could have no special import for any other, and, having said it, subsides into the commonplace. And herein is exemplified the difference between first- and second-rate art. The purpose of second-rate art is, as we have seen, to please the senses; hence, until surfeit supervenes, the same stimulus will invariably produce the same effect. But first-rate art loses its effect. Its appeal will vary and diminish with lapse of time, so that heresy becomes platitude and revolutionary thought conventional dogma. Thus the living beliefs of yesterday are petrified in the Prayer Books of to-day, and the immoralities of to-day are enshrined in the Family Heralds of to-morrow. Great art is for an age and relative to the purposes of that age: second-rate art can perform its pastrycook's function with equal effect in any age. Putting the distinction in another way, we may say that while the artist who is good but not great is mainly decorative, the great men are dynamic as well. Men like Dante, Michelangelo

and Leonardo da Vinci challenged the minds as well as satisfied the æsthetic senses of their contemporaries, while Petrach, Raphael and Titian satisfied their æsthetic senses only. The value of the first three, which was relative to their age, has diminished now that the challenge of their work has been taken up ; the last three are as great as, but no greater than, they ever were.

This completes what I have to say about the effects of art, of art, that is to say, as you have conceived it, upon readers, spectators and audience. Let us now proceed to consider its effect upon the artist.

Objections to the Foregoing Theory

PROFESSOR CAMERON : I really cannot allow you to continue further without interruption. You are sufficiently acquainted with the position I hold to be well aware that your whole attitude can only provoke in me the profoundest disagreement ; nor need I enlarge upon that. But some of the statements you have recently made, and the more extreme positions to which the logical development of your fallacious premises has led you, cannot be passed without comment, if this discussion is to retain the form of a discussion instead of degenerating into a monologue.

ANTHONY : By all means interrupt. I shall be delighted with the opportunity of enlarging upon my theory which criticism will provide.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Not only is your position open to objections of a general character, some of which I have indicated, but it becomes ludicrously untrue when applied to notoriously great artists.

It is the business of the artist to teach, you say : beauty of form, delineation of character, ingenious contrivance of plot, production of atmosphere, all

these are of negligible value, unless a lesson or purpose can be detected in the artist's work. Also you say that, when this alleged teaching has been accepted, art has performed its function and virtue goes out of it. And the theory flatly contradicts the facts. What in the name of goodness I should like to know is the lesson that Edgar Allan Poe has to teach us in his *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*? Where is the propaganda in Jane Austen? The one rouses the emotions of horror, the other portrays with scrupulous fidelity and in perfect taste the manners of English country society. Not a hint of an axe to grind in the work of either! I pitch on these two examples of great artists at random; but they show in what an unfortunate dilemma your theory lands you: either you are compelled to invent some fictitious doctrine with the propagation of which to identify the gentle Jane, or you are compelled to deny that she was great. Each conclusion appears equally absurd.

ANTHONY: Certainly I do not deny the greatness. But I cannot understand your difficulty about the teaching. Take Poe. The world, it is agreed, is full of horror: horrors of war, horrors of industrialism, horrors of cruelty of parents to children, of white men to black men, of men to animals. The normal man is so used to these horrors, his sense of humanity gets so blunted and dulled, not only by custom and familiarity but by outbreaks of legalized cruelty such as the late war, that he scarcely notices their existence. If he does, he cannot but find excuses for what he is used to. Now Poe's tales, by concentrating our attention upon horrors to which we are not accustomed, make us realize the significance of those to which we are. We may say that it is only by presenting the horrible, which is also bizarre, that you excite man's repulsion to the horrible. But once such repulsion has been aroused, it may be excited

again by the horrible in whatever form it presents itself, even when it does so in the form to which habit has accustomed us : and repulsion may result in action to end what repels. It is possible, if not likely, that the effect of Poe may have been to quicken what is called the social conscience. We shall protest the more vigorously against cruelty and ugliness wherever we meet them after a reading of his works.

As for Jane Austen, I admit that at the first glance she might well appear the most difficult example of a great artist, from the point of view of my theory, that you could have chosen. She is so pure and passionless, she appears so entirely to accept and approve of the opinions and ways of life of those about her. She was, it would seem, at once the prop and the mirror of the rather limited outlook on the world that was permitted to an English country gentlewoman. But on closer inspection I think that a definite attitude towards this world, if not a deliberate design in its adoption, begins to reveal itself. There is a continual if restrained protest against pretentiousness and hypocrisy in whatever form they are presented. Ostentation and display are everywhere censured, and as you continue your reading of her books you find that there grows upon you, through numberless hints and implications, a consciousness that your author is pleading for greater simplicity and less affectation in contemporary manners and customs. The persons of whom she approves, Elizabeth Bennett, Mr. Knightley, and Fanny and Edward in *Mansfield Park*, are persons of little or no ceremony : and they share a hatred for the affectation and hollow politeness of others.

Yes, Jane Austen may, I think, be regarded as the satirist of excess, an unconscious subscriber to the Greek doctrine of μηδὲν ἄγαν, who chose to draw her lessons of moderation and simplicity

from the portrayal of manners rather than of passions, and to censure an excess of modishness leading to affectation, where others have depicted an excess of feeling leading to disaster.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : As in *Wuthering Heights*, for instance ?

ANTHONY : As in *Wuthering Heights*, where the authoress, following in the footsteps of the Greeks, seems to have wished to show us the Nemesis that waits on unbridled passion, and the mockery of the gods for the ambitions of the self-willed.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : But what can you say of purely realistic and descriptive works, that yet achieve artistic eminence ? Take a work like Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, a record of travel in a strange land, or Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale*, which rests content with the portrayal of the most minute incidents in the lives of commonplace persons passed in a commonplace town, eschews comment, draws no moral, and aims solely at painting a complete picture, as it were of still life, for our contemplation. It is a picture too that suggests no questions to the mind of the observer, and most assuredly conveys no lessons : it is like the picture of an interior by a great Dutch artist. And yet the *Old Wives' Tale* is a great work.

ANTHONY : I agree. And works of such a character occupy a very important place in my theory. Take Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, or if you prefer it, any other of the great Picaresque romances in which the author seasons incident with sage comment upon life. Have they not the power of revealing one to oneself ? Do they not tell you something about yourself that you never knew before, so that when such and such an incident is passed in review you say, " Of course that is exactly what I should have felt or said."

In this sense all great books have the effect of revealing the reader to himself. In reading, let us

say, *Moby Dick*, it is not only the mind of the author with which you become acquainted ; you become acquainted with your own, and in enlarging your consciousness of yourself you are at the same time enriching it. For what after all is the object of reading unless it produces some change in you and in your attitude to life, unless it enables you to see in life more scope for your sympathy and understanding, and helps you to bring to it more knowledge both of yourself and of others ? It is often urged as a recommendation of books that they take you out of yourself. But it is only second-rate books that are thus praised. A book by a first-rate artist is an enhancement of, rather than a distraction from, life. Concentrating the mind of the reader upon the life around him, it enables him to realize the more keenly, whether by contrast or by sympathy, his own attitude towards it, and so realizing, to come to a better knowledge of himself.

It is a commonplace that a piece of Crown Derby china, which, to the ordinary eye, is merely an inefficiently fragile article of domestic use, reveals to the connoisseur a grace, a beauty, and a delicacy of form and colouring which transports him with modified rapture. The effect of reading great fiction of the realistic type is not dissimilar. Where previously you saw only a drab world peopled by unworthy, uninteresting and middle-class persons, you now behold a world of intensely individual and various human beings, living lives which are to them the most supremely interesting things in the world, and deriving, like Sophia and Mr. Povey, as much excitement from the unexpected extraction of a loose and aching tooth as Wellington can have ever experienced from his victory at Waterloo.

It is the function of the great artist to communicate this excitement to you : to invest the world

of commonplace with the glamour of the unexpected. It is easy enough to idealize things that don't happen ; the difficulty is to idealize those that do. And, when the realistic artist succeeds in this achievement, the effect which he produces upon the reader is twofold.

In the first place, by portraying for him the reactions of people similar to himself in situations of the kind which occur in his own life, the artist directs the reader's attention, whether by virtue of the likeness or of the difference of those reactions, to experiences of his own ; that is to say, he reveals the reader to himself. Secondly, the reader, in bringing to life a consciousness enriched with this knowledge of the lives and feelings of others, will look out upon the world with a wider sympathy and a deeper understanding, prompting him to assist in the task of removing those anomalies and injustices, whose harsh incidence has occasioned the scope for his sympathy and the need for his understanding.

The Function of Art in Increasing Self-knowledge

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Yes, I recognize the second of these effects, if indeed it is an effect, as one upon which your theory may legitimately pride itself. But what about the first ? What is all this talk about revealing the self to the self, of increasing self-consciousness and so on ? It has been slipped in incidentally ; yet it savours rather of my view, which insists on a contemplative attitude towards works of art, than of yours, which assesses the value of such works only in relation to their effects on human action ? Why after all increase self-knowledge, since the result is usually to diminish efficiency and resolution in action ? Need I quote Hamlet ?

ANTHONY: No, you need not! I am sorry, though, that I did not announce this inclusion of self-revelation in my scheme with a sufficient flourish of trumpets. But I assure you that no mental sleight of hand was intended. It is a subject upon which I am reluctant to speak now, since it belongs more properly to the sphere of metaphysics, and would take us far from our present topic.

Let me, however, attempt to justify what I have said by briefly mentioning two ways in which it follows from my theory that increase of self-consciousness is a good. In the first place, according to the metaphysical view from which these theories of art and literature spring, evolution is a process whereby life continuously emerges from unconsciousness to consciousness. Life as it appears initially in the material world is an unconscious force, a blind, instinctive thrust. As it evolves in the persons and through the agencies of living organisms it rises gradually into consciousness, which later becomes self-consciousness, acquiring in the process first a knowledge of the fact that it is developing, and secondly a premonition of the end or purpose which its development seeks to achieve. Thus individuals are the tools which life has created to effect its own development. Given this conception of the living organism, it is only to be expected that changes in living organisms should be the witnesses of a change in the character of life as a whole. This change takes the form of a gradual enlargement of the area of vital consciousness. The enlargement of consciousness in one generation gives rise in the next to the emergence of new faculties and powers, which appear as innate characters. Increase of self-knowledge furthers, therefore, the purpose of evolution.

Secondly, the experimental character of the methods of the Life Force cannot too often be insisted upon. We say that it proceeds by the

method of trial and error, but there is a predominance of error. Man appears to be the high-water mark of the Life Force in the way of creative effort up to the present, and man in virtue of his mind may perhaps be regarded by Life as a source of temporary congratulation. Yet what a wretched mind it is ! How it thwarts the purposes of evolution ! How it raises up obstructions to itself merely to destroy them ! How it refuses to face reality, dressing it up in the trappings of idealism and romance, and then bruising itself against the brick wall it has so striven to disguise ! Look at war ! The waste, the stupidity, ignorance, cruelty and folly of it ! Yet up to the present the main use to which man has put his superior mind is that of perfecting means for the destruction of other men. Hence the necessity for evolving a mind which will be more amenable to the purposes of life and capable of higher powers of organization in its service. To increase and to perfect the mind is the work of the philosopher, and one of the methods adopted historically for the achievement of this end is the method of self-contemplation. A mind which possesses increased knowledge of itself and of its powers may use its knowledge to increase its powers, and the more powerful the mind the more serviceable the weapon.

In these two ways I have endeavoured briefly to indicate the importance of self-knowledge on my theory, and if the theory be admitted, you must, I think, grant the value of that type of art which has the effect of increasing it.

The art I have in mind is, as I have said, the art of the realistic novel as embodied in the works of men like Arnold Bennett and Guy de Maupassant and Balzac, and most of all of Tolstoy when he descends from his hobby horses and contents himself with describing men and women as he sees

them, without explaining to them how and why they ought to be different. And with this type of art we may, I think, rank the paintings of the great Dutch school: those pictures of quiet, cool interiors, peopled by everyday men and women engaged in the performance of humdrum tasks in perfect tranquillity and fatuous solemnity. How like ourselves!

Is the Great Artist a Visionary?

PROFESSOR CAMERON: There may be something to say for this function you ascribe to the realist. But he is after all only an artist in a minor key. The great men of art, the Michelangelos, the Beethovens, the Miltons, the Shelleys and the Dantes were not realists: they cared as little about the details of commonplace lives as they cared to improve or reform those lives by delivering propagandist messages. They were visionaries and dreamers, and in pursuing their shining visions, they created for us a glorified world to which mankind has always been anxious to escape from the sordid worries and cares of the real one.

Meredith's women are like no women who ever lived, and their conversation is impossibly brilliant; but in this very unreality lies the source of their charm. And when Meredith spun these women from the loom of his vivid imagination, he wished only to express in words his vision of the possibilities that were latent in human intercourse, to create glorified beings in a world unlike because more brilliant than his own, but not to mirror his own, nor even, at any rate explicitly, to change it.

The artist in fact, in virtue of his special gifts, sees a vision which is denied to ordinary men.

In my view that vision is no fantastic illusion, but a seeing through to the reality that underlies the world normally presented to our senses. The business of art is simply to express this artist's vision of the real world that lies behind and beyond so that it may be communicable to other men. If the vision is successfully conveyed, it will refine men's understanding, deepen their insight, and enable them to attain to a view of the real which more closely approximates to that of the artist.

In this sense, if you like, the artist is a propagandist, although he has no ulterior purpose in his creations. But you will observe that propagandist or not, and I dislike the word, he is essentially a visionary and dreamer whose eyes are fixed not on appearances but on reality, not on this world but on the next. The artist is, in fact, the bridge that joins the two.

ANTHONY : I am afraid that what you have just said appears to me to embody one of the most profound misapprehensions to which persons who hold your view are liable. The statement that the artist is a visionary or dreamer may be true of second-rate artists, whose only purpose is to entertain. This object they can most easily achieve by providing a refuge from the everyday world, and placing their scene of action, let us say on a South Sea island, or in a Utopia of the future. And there is a sense in which such men, or at any rate the best of them, may be called dreamers. Living in a world of reverie and imagination, they spin from it fantasies and romances which may come to them to seem more real than the world around them. The *Shaving of Shagpat* is such a work, the *Crystal Age* is another, *Deirdre* another. And since the interest of the author lies in the imaginative world he has created, instead of in the world into which it has pleased God to call him, he may be called a dreamer in that he dreams away his

life. The first-rate artist is the exact converse. That he dreams of what might be is true, but he does so only that he may modify what is. He has no value for his dreams as dreams. For where the romancer is content to dream his life, the real artist insists on living his dreams.

And the true artist has no ideals : he is drawn by no shining vision in whose pursuit his life is spent. He is merely pushed from behind by a creative force which leaves him no option but to do its will. At the bidding of that force he must create and teach. Yet in so doing he can give no conscious or rational account of his activities. His pictures, his books, his parables and sermons are, in fact, the outcome of an inspiration of which he can tell you nothing, because he knows nothing. Once get it out of your head that the artist is drawn forward by the compelling power of some vision or ideal, once realize that he is pushed from behind instead of being pulled from in front, and many of his characteristics, for which you must be at a loss to account, become immediately intelligible.

Take, for example, that capacity for which the great artist is primarily remarkable, the capacity for seeing reality as it is. It is this power which enables him to penetrate current shams and conventions. He possesses the faculty of discerning men's desires, hopes, imaginations and ambitions, under the cloak of hypocrisy with which they are accustomed to conceal themselves from their neighbours. It is from this penetrating vision into the real, this concentration upon the actual, that great artists derive the power they possess of going direct to the truth, and enshrining it in words that are as simple as the truth they convey. Hence the parables of Christ, the short stories of Tolstoy, the sayings of Buddha, which by a homely analogy, a thrust of irony, or a striking image, strip away the husk of convention from life, and bring their

hearers face to face with truth. And not only with truth, but with new truth : for these are the men who have the power to open up for mankind new horizons : and they possess this power largely in virtue of their faculty of concentrated vision on the actual.

Take the first great artist in this illustrious line, who, at the bidding of evolution's prompting, opened up new possibilities for the race. The ape, who first abandoned the trees, forwent the use of his tail, gave up his crouching position, and elevated himself from all fours into a precarious eminence on two legs, was making possible the whole subsequent course of human development. Yet he was no idealist. He did not envisage his progeny of Shakespeares and Napoleons, and deny himself the use of his tail to make their existence possible ; he was moved simply by an irresistible push from behind, which made him substitute raw meat for his vegetarian diet. The ape concentrated upon the actual, and, by dint of his superior power of seeing reality as it was, contrived the necessary measures to effect the substitution while his fellows were still swinging in the trees.

This may be rank, bad biology for all I know, but most decidedly it illustrates the method of the great artist. Christ, Buddha, Marx, Swift, Ibsen, Bunyan, Shaw ; these are the men who have moved and changed the world, and they are no dreamers of dreams. A clear cut and definite vision of the real as it is, is made the basis of an indictment of that real. In elaborating his indictment the artist is drawn insensibly as it were to conceive a more humane and enlightened conception of society, a nobler ideal of human conduct or a more spiritual vision of the nature and purpose of human life. As his work proceeds—and it is notorious that the development in the work of great men is almost always from the destructive to the constructive—

these scattered suggestions begin to crystallize into a more or less definite presentation of the real as it might be. The method, you observe, is as different as possible from that pursued by the artist as you envisaged him. Your artist spins from his own imagination fantasies which have no necessary relation to life, and no object except to delight those who read them: mine uses his peculiarly intense vision of the actual to illumine the path along which the actual may become better than itself. Your artist has no interest in the real: mine has that intense, practical interest which bids him change it. Yours is an idealist: mine is a mere tool. Yours hitches his wagon to a star: mine drives his slowly over the earth, content if he can reach as far as the next field. Yours pleases, mine annoys. Yours is a parasite upon the society that exists, mine is the midwife for the society that is to be.

Thus the great artist, as I conceive him, is at once a photographer and a visionary. But he photographs the real only to show up its defects, and, in so doing, to make men desire something better. That is why the early works of the greatest artists are almost all of an austerely realistic character. The artist is a photographer first, with a penchant for ugly subjects. Why is this?

Because only the visionary can afford to be a realist. Upon the ordinary man the world impinges closely and harshly: too closely to allow him the capacity, too harshly to permit him the inclination to paint it. We dare not, most of us, paint the world as we see it, for fear of fixing the disagreeable picture permanently on our mind's eye. We desire to escape it, and delight therefore in the works of beauty and romance commended by your theory. It is because we are realists, our vision being bounded by the actual and our lives confined

within the horizon of the commonplace, that in literature and fantasy we seek romance.

But the case of the artist is different. Creating at the behest of some power which he can neither explain nor control, and finding reality in his feeling of oneness with the power that works within him, he can dare to paint the world as he knows it. Instead of being obsessed, overcome, stifled and intimidated by his environment, he knows himself to be independent of it, and can depict it impartially from without. It is because he has a real world of his own in which his inner life is passed, that he can venture without fear of infection accurately to portray that of his fellows. Thus the greatest realistic work proceeds from and is conditioned by the workings of the Force behind evolution, as completely as that work which, more obviously inspired, acts as a signpost to the future.

But I fear that I have once again been led into digression, though, in this case, the fault was yours. You protested that the artist was merely a visionary or dreamer : that his concern was not with the existing world, and that it was absurd therefore to regard him as charged with a conscious mission to change it. I was forced in reply to point to the obvious fact that the great men who had changed the face of society, so far from being visionaries or dreamers, were hard-headed, practical people, gifted with a peculiarly penetrating vision of the present. It is this power of seeing what exists as it is, as much as the capacity for conceiving the future as it might be, which has enabled the greatest artists to appeal to and to move the hearts of men. This unflinching realism, so characteristic of the work of the greatest writers, springs from the continual urge of Life itself, since it is only those who are the servants of a reality more complete than the set of appearances which make up

the world for the ordinary man, who have the power and the desire to depict those appearances for what they are. Only the artist who has his own world of romance for escape, can endure to paint the world of the slum and the suburb.

But these remarks were all of them, I am afraid, digressive, and it is high time to tackle that aspect of our subject, which will, so far as I am concerned, bring our discussion to a close.

MR. BANKS : What may that be ? I should have thought that you had already exhausted all that could be said on the relations of the artist to the Life Force.

II. The Effect of Art that Aims at Pleasing upon the Artist

ANTHONY : Very nearly ; but there is one matter that we have still omitted to consider. I have spoken of the effect of art conceived according to the standards of the academic mind upon the reader or spectator : I have still to consider its effect upon the artist, and to suggest by implication the contrary effect of art conceived according to my theory.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Even on this point little enough remains to be said. We have each described more than once the function and position of the artist in relation to our theories, and we have each failed lamentably to convince the other.

ANTHONY : Yes. But have we mentioned the *effect* upon the artist of the application of our theories ? Come ! The point is a new one and is worth considering. I promise you it shall not take us long. We want to describe how the artist whose work is carried out according to your prescription is affected thereby, and for this purpose we will take a concrete instance.

Sometime after the beginning of the seventeenth century there was published Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a work which has been a delight to the academic mind ever since. I need not describe its character, the store of curious knowledge it enshrines, its unblushing digressions, its bookishness, its shameless plundering of mediæval pedants and charlatans for saws and recipes, moral maxims and political platitudes, entomological observations and mythological science. What is important for my purpose is that this book, a famous and a great book by most standards, took Burton between twenty and thirty years to write ; and the writing of it is usually considered to be an achievement of which any man should be proud. I say usually, because on my theory it is obvious that the value of this work is very small. It sheds no new light upon problems of morals, of politics, or of human relationship ; it stimulates no new thoughts ; it neither changes nor stirs the reader to change himself ; it is not in any sense original ; it is rather a museum of the past, into which the author has striven to pack all the curiosities of thought and feeling which unremitting research has revealed to him. In a word, it looks backward instead of forward. Clearly a book to which only those who believe the value of knowledge to be permanent, even when that knowledge dissolves on examination into myth, can apply the epithet great.

Upon the compilation of such a work, then, according to your theory, but not according to mine, the author should have spent happy years of pride and effort, knowing that he was handing down to posterity an imperishable storehouse of curious lore and out-of-the-way learning.

What are the facts ? It so happens that Burton has strangely impregnated this mass of accumulated detail which forms the *Anatomy* with the flavour of his own personality ; and it is probably

this personal element, which runs through the whole like a single thread in a parti-coloured web, which has so endeared the work to subsequent scholars. What does it reveal ? A fine, magnanimous spirit chafing at the waste of his own life. A disappointed idealist who, finding that the world offers no better scope for his talents than in the collection of the rubbish of antiquity, has recourse, after the habit of such men, to a soured cynicism which his natural kindliness renders difficult to maintain. He is an educated man ; he has knowledge, talents and attainments, but he cannot avoid the belief, my belief mark you, that it is the business of knowledge, talents and attainments to make some practical difference in the world, to improve the material welfare of mankind, to diminish the popular ignorance, to elevate and refine the spirit of man. And because he cannot avoid this belief, he rails against the useless pedantry to which he is condemned. For he has no illusions about his own work : he is fully conscious of the futility of the huge labour he has undertaken, and the resentment which he feels against the destiny which confines him to the sterile, intensive culture of the University, when he might be spreading the light of his attainments in the world, is sufficiently marked to justify the belief that the *Melancholy* his mighty volume is chiefly concerned to dissect is his own.

Now I maintain that this state of mind in Burton, and more especially this attitude to his work, sprang directly from the consciousness of waste on the part of a creative mind condemned by circumstances to sterility——

PROFESSOR CAMERON : May I ask what is your evidence for the extreme melancholy you attribute to Burton ? I always thought of him as a genial, happy, kindly old soul.

ANTHONY : You would ; your theory requires it.

But the evidence is scattered everywhere through his own work. I have a copy here. Listen for instance to this : " We that are University men, like so many hide-bound calves in a pasture, tarry out our time, wither away as a flower ungathered in a garden, and are never used ; or, as so many candles, illumine ourselves alone, obscuring one another's light, and are not discerned here at all, the least of which translated to a dark room or some country benefice where it might shine apart, would give a fair light and be seen over all."

Now I maintain that this complaint of Burton's is typical of the *malaise* that affects all men of creative spirit, who find their creative inspiration confined within the boundaries set by the academic mind. The academic mind breeds a fear of life, especially of what is new in life, and Burton is not the only one who, choosing to purchase security at the expense of adventure, has found to his cost that he has stifled his creative powers, violated his artistic conscience and doomed his efforts to futility. In Burton's case the inhibitions demanded by the circumstances of his life amounted almost to what the psycho-analyst would term a complex : he wished to marry, but he could not ; he wished to travel, but he dared not ; above all he longed for freedom, mental adventure and speculation, that the power, which he felt continuously welling within him, might achieve free and unfettered expression in a new art form, a new philosophy or even in a revolutionary pamphlet. Yet he was obliged by the pressure of the academic mind and the conventions of scholarship which it has established, to waste his talents and his energies in poking about among the rubbish of the past, and by perpetuating those idle thoughts of antiquity which men had long outgrown, to erect a barrier against the newer manifestations of that creative force, into whose service it was his dearest wish

to enter. For men have for three centuries tumbled over themselves in admiration of the *Anatomy*. Because of it a great stream of energy has been abstracted from the service of life ; men's vision of the future has been dimmed by their delight in the past, and new works have come still-born into the world for lack of recognition and encouragement. The *Anatomy of Melancholy* is a monument to a pitiful lack of true occupation, and its completion produced in its author no feeling but that of contempt for its futility. The production of what is merely learned or merely beautiful is, I feel assured, inevitably attended by such feelings. In this connection it is worth noticing that the production of poetic beauty or learning for their own sake has mainly flourished in ages of political apathy, such as the present, when the size of the State offers little opportunity for effective action in the world of affairs. During the profound peace that characterized the Roman Empire after the death of Trajan, men lost interest in the world of politics and action, and turned for a substitute to the cultivation and enjoyment of beauty. A few years before the circle of Pliny the Younger and his friends had asked nothing better than to retire from public life and edit the poets. They wrote, as all academic artists write, not because they had something to say, but because it seemed right to say something. To-day again the State has grown too big to admit of effective influence by individuals, and the machinery of administration too complex to permit of intervention by outsiders. What happens is the result less of individual will and effort than of the interplay of economic forces, whose genesis escapes detection and whose workings and conclusions escape control. In such a posture of affairs the popular ear is captivated by the loudest voice, the popular eye by the crudest design. For the intricacies, the complexities, the

dignity and labour of real statesmanship there is no place, and the best men turn sick at heart from public affairs to seek dignity and retirement in literature and art. But art produced under such circumstances fails to achieve greatness for two reasons. In the first place, a fatalistic attitude towards the world and the forces which condition events is not compatible with great art. The production of great art requires faith in the possibility of change and improvement, and a belief that such change can be effected by human will and effort. The burning indignation that produced *Gulliver's Travels*, the shining vision that illumines *Pilgrim's Progress* or *News from Nowhere*, do not spring from a belief in the impotence of man to control his fate. For the Life Force implants in those it has specially chosen to give expression to its purpose a belief that mankind will not in the long run prove deaf to their words. Apathy and indifference spring from a Fatalism which is the antithesis of the creative force of evolution which I postulate.

In the second place, art which is cultivated as a second string revenges itself by remaining second-rate. Where, as in the modern state, men of conspicuous talent and wide social interests are denied a place of influence in the world of affairs, and endeavour to console themselves with the cultivation of their senses and the production of beauty, the type of art which results lacks both inspiration and originality.

Such men produce dainty lyrics, comedies of manners, *belles lettres* and introspective psychology miscalled fiction. These works set the taste for their age: their influence and example call into being a host of imitators, who strive to exhibit their good taste by cultivating the style of art that has been made fashionable by the elect. Thus the art of a whole age may be minor. The main characteristic of such art is directly derivable from

the circumstances which gave it birth. Where the world of action rebuffs the efforts of those who desire to mould the course of events, they turn perforce to the world of personal relations and intrigue : when external things prove unamenable to control, interest in the external fades and is replaced by interest in the self. Introspection takes the place of action, and objective art which concentrates upon the world gives way to subjective art which is concerned only to express the self.

These, then, are the characteristics of modern art, and they are equally prominent wherever you choose to look. Modern poetry is subjective : it is written as a *divertissement* to immortalize a mood or to crystallize a caprice, rather than under the compulsion of an all-constraining force. Lyrics, which should spring from an absorbed self-forgetfulness, are written in a rapture of self-consciousness. The sensibilities rather than the passions of the writer are presented for our interest, and poems of revolutionary or erotic ardour give place to records of impressions produced by a rainbow or a ribbon. Modern poetry is in fact written by men to be read by women.

In fiction the modern novel substitutes for the record of objective fact the recital of the sensations experienced by the hero, or more usually the heroine. Plot has been long abandoned, but even character-drawing is now thought unnecessary, except in so far as a cinematographic presentation of all the moods, feelings and thoughts of the author, a presentation which is not subjected to censorship, to selection or to arrangement, may be ranked as a form of character delineation. The novel has in fact become a shop window in which temperamental young misses may exhibit their emotions duly labelled, ticketed and appraised for the degustation of the public.

Music is tainted with the same subjectivity. Until

the middle of the nineteenth century it was thought that it was the business of the musician to create objective beauty. Then, under the influence of Wagner, dramatic music supplanted pattern music, and the function of music was mainly held to be the expression or communication of emotion. It is only in the twentieth century, however, that composers have tacitly agreed to proceed upon the assumption that the emotions to be communicated are their own. As these are rarely beautiful, it is not to be expected that the music which is designed to represent them should be remarkable either for harmony or for melody : it is not, and, as a result, modern compositions are to be commended neither on your theory nor on mine, since the musical embodiment of bad temper or eroticism is neither permanently valuable as a work of beauty, nor particularly compelling (except perhaps by way of warning) as a work of propaganda.

As for modern painting, it has long ceased to attempt to depict the external world. It does, presumably, depict something that is going on inside the artist's head ; but whether this occurrence is an idea in the mind caused by the stimulus of some external object, or whether it is a relation between the idea and the object, or whether it is spontaneously generated is a question belonging to the Theory of Knowledge, which it would take us too far from our path to pursue here. Besides, I grow tired of talking and want to finish.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Personally I think it is spontaneously generated.

ANTHONY : Why ?

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Because of its complete unlikeness to anything in the visible world. A modern picture is only called " Portrait of Mrs. Jones," or " Blast Furnaces at Stoke," and called either indifferently, because modern artists are very conventional and still believe it to be necessary to

name a picture after some external object, as though the picture represented it, instead of calling it " My ill temper," or " My desire for a virgin," or whatever the real subject may be.

ANTHONY : Perhaps that is the explanation : but you agree on the main point, which is that the tendency of modern art is to be subjective.

PROFESSOR CAMERON : Certainly I do.

ANTHONY : Now I maintain that this tendency springs directly from the circumstance that art is embraced as a diversion, as a second string ; it is so embraced, partly because it is fashionable, partly because the artist can find no place for his energies in politics and affairs. In any event, art of this type is in no sense an embodiment of the inspiration of the Life Force. It is the art of amateurs produced for dilettantes. Men and women write not because they must, but because, like the people who appear in Tchekov's plays and stories, or in Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, they believe in the cult of art for its own sake, or as a means to the attainment of happiness and beauty. And they pursue happiness and beauty directly, because they are denied by circumstances the opportunity of pursuing anything better worth having : they are compelled to make of personal relationships an end and of their own feelings an interest in life, because they have no ends and interests to serve in the outside world.

Art of this type is valueless from the point of view of the Life Force, because it is stationary, or perhaps I should say, circular. Instead of aiming at changing the world, it aims only at expressing the self : instead of acting as a signpost to the possible, it is only a mirror of the actual. When it should perform the function of true culture which is to bring to birth what is new, it returns the soil that has already been ploughed. For these reasons, then, I believe that the art which seeks to

express the self, equally with the art which aims solely at creating beauty, fails to serve the purposes of the Life Force. The first is circular ; the second is static ; neither represents an advance.

And, that I may return to my main theme, the effect of such art upon the artist is always in a greater or less degree what it was upon Burton. Where the true artist loses himself in the creative inspiration which bears him on, the scholar, the pedant, the realist, and the pretty-pretty poet only become the more conscious of themselves. Where the true artist uses art to lift up his thought out of the selfish little pit of vanity and desire which is himself into that greater self which is the all-embracing spiritual force of which he is but a temporary expression, the second-rater regards it as a device for perpetuating his vanities and enshrining his desires. If art is so used, it will be found that the pursuit of beauty, like the pursuit of pleasure, ends in disillusioned boredom, and that the expression of the self for self-expression's sake is but another name for servitude to the self.

To escape this fate the artist must have at bottom an insight and a vision into the Universe as a whole. He must possess a profound consciousness both of the meaning and of the purpose of the Universe, and his writing must be, from first to last, nothing but the attempt to give expression to such consciousness with the intent that others may share it. And the value of what he will have to say depends wholly and entirely upon the extent to which his works embody some prompting of the Life Force. If the artist by his work helps forward the purpose of evolution, he is a great artist ; if not, he is a mere entertainer. Beyond this nothing matters.

Professor Cameron : And do I understand you to deny completely the value of beauty and form, style and diction, except as means to the better

communication of this message you hold to be so important, and as means which, though useful, are by no means necessary? Have you no place for culture and good taste as things valuable in themselves; and have not beauty and form at least a value relative to the good taste which appreciates them?

ANTHONY: Yes, I have a place for good taste and for culture: they possess the value and perform the function of manure. The mind which has been impregnated with all that is best in literature, the eye that can recognize beauty in pictorial art, the ear that is sensitive to beautiful sounds, are like a richly cultivated soil. Such a soil should be more ready to receive the seed of new thought, and more capable of giving it nurture until the time of fruition arrives. Thus it is to the cultivated mind that we should look to provide the most suitable environment for the growth into consciousness of the seed implanted by the Life Force in the unconscious. And when the seed in the unconscious has grown and taken shape in the conscious as a felt intimation of the direction in which mankind should travel, it still remains to give that intimation concrete form in words, or paint, or music, that there may be communicated to the consciousness of mankind the message of which the artist is the chosen vehicle. And herein lies the function of technique. That the artist may adequately express his vision, that he may give it a form and substance which will at once appeal and attract, it is desirable that he should possess a mastery over all the mysteries and secrets of his art. The writer should possess a flow of words, a sense of style, a feeling for form, the musician a knowledge of harmony and counterpoint, the painter of draughtsmanship and the properties of colours.

All these things, then, are important, but they are not indispensable, and I have in my exposition

tended rather to keep them in the background, just because these secondary things have come so often, under the influence of the academic mind, to usurp the place of the primary thing, the adjuncts of art to be mistaken for its purpose.

But I have dwelt sufficiently often upon the dangers that attend the subordination of matter to form, and there is little fear that in now mentioning the importance of form and technique I shall be misunderstood. They have their place, but it is not the first place.

MR. BANKS : Which is ?

ANTHONY : The persistent striving of the Life Force for more life, more power, more understanding, more consciousness.

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